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APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY INTO GOOD SUPPORT STRATEGIES TO ENHANCE
THE ACQUISITION OF COGNITIVE ACADEMIC LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY
(CALP) FOR GRADE 8 AND 9 ENGLISH SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNERS

By

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THESIS

submitted in fulfillment of the
full requirements for the degree

DOCTOR EDUCATIONIS
in
EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY
in the
FACULTY OF EDUCATION
at the
UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG

SUPERVISOR: Dr H Dunbar-Krige

SEPTEMBER 2016
ABSTRACT

English is seen as the discourse of economic and industrial dominance and empowerment in South Africa. Consequently, many black parents choose to enroll their children in ex-model C schools where the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) is English. In this context black learners have to master all learning areas using English as LoLT with little or no support in their first language. Thus, for the great majority of learners in South Africa, English as a second or even third language learnt solely in the classroom lacks any sustaining environment outside the school. To exacerbate matters many black learners have little exposure to printed material in English, and in addition, academic demands are made in English which is not their first language. Against the above background, English as LoLT has become a key barrier to learning in most South African schools. The most affected areas are general literacy (reading, spelling and writing) and mathematical competence. The aim of this study was to appreciate good support strategies in two selected ex-model C secondary schools in order to identify good practice and generate greater excellence in support strategies to enhance the acquisition of Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency for Grade 8 and 9 English Second Language (ESL) Learners. The support strategies emanating from the study were compiled in the form of guidelines and will be used by the District Based Support Team as well as School Based Support Teams to support educators who are faced with this enormous challenge.

A literature study reviewed themes regarding inclusion, support structures and the difficulties experienced by ESL learners due to their limited proficiency in English. Special cognisance was given to the work of Cummins (2000). His Threshold Theory suggests that three critical levels of language proficiency influence learning. At the first threshold, learners have low levels of competence in both their languages and thus experience learning difficulties. At the second threshold, learners have age-appropriate competence in one language and, as long as this is the language they use for learning, they experience no benefit or disadvantage from their bilingualism. At the third level, learners have age-appropriate proficiency in two languages. One major educational implication of the threshold hypothesis is that support programmes must aim to promote an additive form of bilingualism where the first language will need to
play a strong role. Cummins (1981) makes a distinction between two different kinds of competence: Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency. He explains the distinction between the two on the basis of cognitive demands and contextual support involved in particular language tasks or activities.

I used Appreciative Inquiry as my research method as I wanted to explore what possibilities exist if the lens shifts from seeing the current situation as a problem to be solved to seeing it as a miracle to be appreciated. Research by Cooperrider and Whitney (2008) showed that by appreciating and sharing good practices, we can create greater excellence. Data collection was done through focus group interviews with the School Management Teams and School Based Support Teams, individual interviews with Grade 8 and 9 educators and through observation and field notes. Appreciative Inquiry is qualitative following an interpretive paradigm and involves four stages, namely:

- The Discovery Phase: when the researcher appreciates what is the best of what is;
- The Dream Phase: when the participants envision better practices;
- The Design Phase: when we ask, “What should be the ideal?” During this phase the support strategies were compiled;
- The Destiny Phase: when the implementation of the better practices takes place. This phase was not done during this study.

The support strategies generated from this study included general school- and classroom strategies, strategies to strengthen reading, reading comprehension and writing as well as differentiated assessment strategies.
EDITING LETTER

This is to confirm that the thesis: *Appreciative Inquiry into good support strategies to enhance the acquisition of Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) for Grade 8 and 9 English Second Language learners* by Magdalena Petronella van der Westhuizen has been edited for language use and technical aspects.

EM Lemmer
104 Charles St
Brooklyn
0181
I thank God for granting me the strength and perseverance to complete this study.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my husband, Willie, and my amazing children, Bernard, Iwan and Chantelle. Without your support and encouragement this thesis would not be completed.

I would also like to thank my supervisor, Dr Helen Dunbar-Krige, for her professional and personal guidance and assistance throughout the course of study.

My sincere appreciation is extended to Professor Eleanor Lemmer for the editing of the script in such a professional and tactful manner.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDITING LETTER</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DECLARATION</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TABLE OF CONTENTS</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF FIGURES</td>
<td>xiv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td>xvi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF APPENDIXES</td>
<td>xvii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABBREVIATIONS</td>
<td>xviii</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subsection</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1 INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 CONTEXT OF THE STUDY</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 AIM OF THE STUDY</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 RESEARCH PROBLEM AND QUESTION</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 POLICY- AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: INCLUSIVE</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EDUCATION AND ENGLISH SECOND LANGUAGE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6.1 Research design</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6.2 Research methodology</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6.3 Research approach and paradigm</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6.4 Site selection and sampling of participants</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6.4.1 Description of the schools</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6.4.2 Description of the participants</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6.5 Data collection and analysis</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6.5.1 Data collection</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6.5.2 Data analysis</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 2
INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN A SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT AND BARRIERS TO LEARNING EXPERIENCED BY SECONDARY SCHOOL LEARNERS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

2.2 INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

2.3 SUPPORT STRUCTURES TO PROMOTE INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

2.3.1 The educator

2.3.2 School Based Support Team (SBST)

2.3.3 District Based Support Team (DBST)

2.3.4 Full Service Schools

2.3.5 Special Schools Resource Centres
CHAPTER 3
INADEQUATE COGNITIVE ACADEMIC LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY AS SPECIFIC BARRIER TO LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

3.1 INTRODUCTION
3.1.1 Language in Education Policy in South Africa
3.2 THE VALUE AND IMPORTANCE OF LANGUAGE
3.3 FIRST LANGUAGE ACQUISITION
3.4 SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION
3.4.1 Cummins’s theory
3.4.1.1 Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS)
3.4.1.2 Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP)
3.4.1.3 Critiques of the Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills/Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency distinction
3.5 UNSUPPORTED LANGUAGE TRANSITIONS
3.6 SUPPORT STRATEGIES TO ASSIST THE DEVELOPMENT OF COGNITIVE ACADEMIC LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY AMONG ENGLISH SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNERS
3.6.1 General classroom support strategies for enhancing Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency
3.6.2 Classroom activities and assessment
3.6.3 Developing reading and comprehension skills across the curriculum
3.6.4 Supporting writing skills across the curriculum
3.7 CONCLUSION

CHAPTER 4
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY
4.1 INTRODUCTION
4.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM AND APPROACH
4.2.1 Ontology (belief system about the nature of reality) 83
4.2.2 Epistemology (the relationship between knower and known) 84
4.2.3 Methodology 84
4.3 MOTIVATION FOR SELECTION OF APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY 86
4.3.1 The process of Appreciative Inquiry 89
4.3.2 Four operating principles of Appreciative Inquiry 90
4.3.2.1 Appreciative 90
4.3.2.2 Applicable 91
4.3.2.3 Provocative 91
4.3.2.4 Collaborative 92
4.3.3 Appreciative Inquiry as methodology 92
4.3.4 Critique against using Appreciative Inquiry 99
4.4 DATA COLLECTION 100
4.4.1 Site selection and sampling of participants 100
4.4.1.1 Description of the schools 100
4.4.1.2 Description of the participants 103
4.4.2 Data collection 104
4.4.2.1 Field notes of observations 105
4.4.2.2 Focus group interviews 105
4.5 DATA ANALYSIS 107
4.6 TRUSTWORTHINESS 108
4.7 ETHICAL PROCEDURE 110
4.8 CONCLUSION 110

CHAPTER 5
APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY OUTCOMES AND FINDINGS
5.1 INTRODUCTION 112
5.2 DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS IN EACH PHASE OF AI PROCESS
5.2.1 Phase One: Discovery Phase 114
5.2.2 Emerging good support strategies from the discovery phase (School N) 115
| 5.2.2.1 | Knowledge of every learner | 115 |
| 5.2.2.2 | Differentiation | 117 |
| 5.2.2.3 | Aided language stimulation and vocabulary enhancement by using technology, models etc. / Hands-on activities | 119 |
| 5.2.2.4 | Scaffolding | 124 |
| 5.2.2.5 | Integrating language lessons into other curriculum areas | 125 |
| 5.2.2.6 | Code-switching | 126 |
| 5.2.2.7 | Re-teaching of basic language skills | 127 |
| 5.2.2.8 | Teaching of reading | 127 |
| 5.2.2.9 | Reading aloud | 128 |
| 5.2.2.10 | Paired reading | 128 |
| 5.2.2.11 | Explicit teaching of grammar | 129 |
| 5.2.2.12 | Cooperative learning/Peer support | 129 |
| 5.2.2.13 | Peer-coaching | 129 |
| 5.2.2.14 | Continuous and differentiated assessment tasks | 130 |
| 5.2.2.15 | Assessment concessions | 130 |
| **5.2.3** | **Emerging good support strategies from the discovery phase (School P)** | 131 |
| 5.2.3.1 | Scaffolding | 131 |
| 5.2.3.2 | Extensive knowledge of every learner | 131 |
| 5.2.3.3 | Cooperative learning/Peer support | 131 |
| 5.2.3.4 | Differentiation | 132 |
| 5.2.3.5 | Integrating language lessons into other curriculum areas | 137 |
| 5.2.3.6 | Multicultural picture books | 138 |
| 5.2.3.7 | Creating classroom libraries and making use of dictionaries | 138 |
| 5.2.3.8 | Reading aloud | 140 |
| 5.2.3.9 | Paired reading or repeated reading | 141 |
| 5.2.3.10 | Presenting of oral feedback and asking clarifying questions in order to improve comprehension | 141 |
| 5.2.3.11 | Language educators teach spelling explicitly | 141 |
| 5.2.3.12 | Provide wordlists/ vocabulary lists | 142 |
| 5.2.3.13 | Guided writing | 142 |
5.2.3.14 Aided language stimulation and vocabulary enhancement by using technology, models etc. / Hands-on activities 143
5.2.3.15 Making use of assistive devices 145
5.2.3.16 Continuous and differentiated assessment tasks 145
5.2.3.17 Assessment concessions 145
5.2.3.18 Parental involvement 146
5.2.3.19 Homework 146
5.2.4 Discussion and interpretation of the findings during the Discovery Phase 147
5.2.5 Phase Two: Dream Phase 149
5.2.5.1 Findings of the Dream Phase 149
5.2.5.2 Discussion of the findings of the Dream Phase 151
5.2.6 Phase Three: Design Phase 152
5.3 CONCLUSION 153

CHAPTER 6
FINAL CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND AREAS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH
6.1 INTRODUCTION 154
6.2 THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY 154
6.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS 154
6.4 SUMMARY OF THE LITERATURE REVIEW 155
6.5 SUMMARY OF THE METHODOLOGY 157
6.6 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS 158
6.7 IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE AND RECOMMENDATIONS 161
6.7.1 Implications for educators 161
6.7.2 Implications for DBST 161
6.8 CONTRIBUTIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY INTO GOOD PRACTICES TO ACCELERATE THE ACQUISITION OF COGNITIVE ACADEMIC LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY FOR GRADE 8 AND 9 ENGLISH SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNERS 162
6.8.1 Contributions from the Appreciative Inquiry into good practices to accelerate the Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency for Grade 8 and 9 English Second Language learners

6.8.2 Limitations of appreciative inquiry into good practices to accelerate the acquisition of Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency for Grade 8 and 9 ESL learners

6.9 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

6.10 CONCLUSION

BIBLIOGRAPHY
**LIST OF FIGURES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1.1</td>
<td>Research process</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3.1</td>
<td>Contrast between the SUP and CUP models of bilingual proficiency</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3.2</td>
<td>Multiple Intelligences</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3.3</td>
<td>Purpose of assessment</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.1</td>
<td>Appreciative Inquiry 4-D Model</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.2</td>
<td>Appreciative Inquiry 4-I Model</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5.1</td>
<td>Example of differentiated science worksheet School N</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5.2</td>
<td>Photo of learner using a laptop as well as printed script</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5.3</td>
<td>Illustrations from Oxford Successful English Grade 6 English Learner’s Book: First additional Language (p. 43)</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5.4</td>
<td>Illustrations from Oxford Successful English Grade 6 English Learner’s Book: First additional Language (p. 42)</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5.5</td>
<td>Illustrations from Oxford Successful English Grade 6 English Learner’s Book: First additional Language (p. 45)</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5.6</td>
<td>Integrated Lesson Plan: School N</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5.7</td>
<td>Example of Word List: School N</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5.8</td>
<td>Example of worksheet prepared by an educator (School P) on planning a speech</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5.9</td>
<td>Example of a mind-map</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5.10</td>
<td>Example of worksheet where clarifying questions are asked</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5.11</td>
<td>Video - lesson presentation: School P</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5.12</td>
<td>Examples of different genres to stimulate learning</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5.13</td>
<td>Chambers-Macmillan South African Dictionary: Senior Primary: Illustrated (1996)</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5.14</td>
<td>Examples of worksheets to enhance comprehension</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 5.15  Examples of worksheets by educators with regard to guided writing  142
Figure 5.16  Learner using a reading machine  143
Figure 5.17  Lesson Presentation School P  144
Figure 5.18  Lesson Presentation School P  144
## LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Table 1.1</td>
<td>Differences between Problem Solving and Appreciative Inquiry</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 5.1</td>
<td>Summary of data collection and analysis in the AI process</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 5.2</td>
<td>Example of Baseline Assessment outcomes for Grade 8 learners</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# APPENDIXES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appendix</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 1</td>
<td>Observation Sheet</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 2</td>
<td>Focus Group Interview Guide</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 3</td>
<td>Field Notes</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 4</td>
<td>Consent Letters</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 5</td>
<td>Support Strategies Guidelines</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AI</td>
<td>Appreciative Inquiry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANA</td>
<td>Annual National Assessments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BICS</td>
<td>Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CALP</td>
<td>Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAPS</td>
<td>Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CUP</td>
<td>Common Underlying Proficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DBE</td>
<td>Department of Basic Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DBST</td>
<td>District Base Support Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DoE</td>
<td>Department of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESL</td>
<td>English Second Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDE</td>
<td>Gauteng Department of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IE</td>
<td>Inclusive Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISS</td>
<td>Inclusion and Special Schools Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L1</td>
<td>First Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2</td>
<td>Second Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LiEP</td>
<td>Language in Education Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LoLT</td>
<td>Language of Learning and Teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSE</td>
<td>Learning Support Educator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LTSM</td>
<td>Learning and Teaching Support Material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCESS</td>
<td>National Committee for Education Support Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCSNET</td>
<td>National Commission of Special Needs in Education and Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCS</td>
<td>National Curriculum Statement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| SBST         | School Base Support Team  
(Also referred to as institutional based support team) |
| SMT          | School Management Team |
| SUP          | Separate Underlying Proficiency |
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this research is to appreciate good support strategies to enhance the acquisition of Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) for Grade 8 and 9 English Second Language (ESL) learners. I have used an Appreciative Inquiry (AI) to reconstruct actual good practices into better next practices (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2008: 9).

In this chapter the research problem and research question will be discussed and subsequently contextualised by firstly describing the policy of inclusion in a South African context with the emphasis on support provided to address second language learning as a key barrier to learning. Further, the research approach and design will be described, the site selection and sampling of participants will be portrayed and a description of the schools and the participants will be provided.

1.2 CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

Since 1994 the South African education system has been transformed from a racially segregated education system to an inclusive and supportive one. The ideal of an inclusive and supportive system is to accommodate all learners, regardless of ability, race, gender, language or disability (Engelbrecht, Green, Naicker & Engelbrecht, 1999:3).

The aim of previous apartheid education policies was to perpetuate white supremacy by giving white children a better quality education than that given to other races, resulting in a system which entrenched gross educational disparities and inequities between racial groups. During 1976 black learners protested against Afrikaans as a medium of learning and teaching and since then Afrikaans was seen as the language of the oppressor and English as the global language that would lead them to success and freedom. As a
result, many black parents perceive schools providing English medium education as preferable to that provided by less resourced schools which use indigenous languages as the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) (Engelbrecht, Oswald & Forlin, 2006: 34). In spite of a linguistic disadvantage as second language speakers, black parents and learners choose English because it is the discourse of economic and industrial dominance and empowerment (Von Gruenewaldt, 1999:206). Consequently, many parents choose to enroll their children in ex-model C schools where the LoLT is English (Engelbrecht et.al, 2006: 34). Ex-model C Schools refer to schools which were situated in demographic areas which were only for white citizens during the apartheid era. After 1994 the School Governing Bodies (SGBs) could decide on the languages offered at their schools based on parental preference and or the demographic profile of learners at a particular school. In this context black learners have to master all learning areas using English as LoLT with little or no support in the first language (L1). Thus, for the great majority of learners in South Africa, English as a second or even third language learnt solely in the classroom lacks any sustaining environment outside the school. The majority of these second language learners, seldom speak English at home. To exacerbate matters they have little exposure to printed material in English, and, in addition, academic demands are made in English which is not their first language (Van Rooyen & Jordaan, 2009:272).

The Language in Education Policy (LiEP) of July 1997 (DNE, 1997) states that the individual has the right to choose the LoLT and that being multilingual is a defining characteristic of being a South African. It further states that the underlying principle is to maintain home languages while providing access to the effective acquisition of an additional language. The National Curriculum Statement (NCS) for Languages (DNE, 2002:4) states that learners should become competent in their additional language while their home language is maintained and developed.

The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) that have been implemented from Grade R-3 since January 2012 states that ten hours are allocated for languages in Grades R - 2 and eleven hours in Grade 3 per week. A maximum of eight hours and a minimum of seven hours are allocated for home Language and a minimum of two hours
and a maximum of three hours for Additional Language in Grades 1 and 2. In Grade 3 a maximum of eight hours and a minimum of seven hours are allocated for home Language and a minimum of three hours and a maximum of four hours for First Additional Language (DNE, 2011:5). Thus, CAPS should support learners in township schools and rural schools as they will be introduced to English from Grade R; however, black learners in ex-model C schools, still lack any sustaining environment outside the school and their home language will also not be necessarily maintained.

The concern expressed in the above discussion concurs with Cummins’s (2001:71) “Developmental Interdependence Hypothesis” which supports views expressed by Vygotsky (1986) that learning a second language necessitates learning new words but not new concepts. This presupposes that children’s concepts are well developed in their home language. Accordingly, Cummins (2001:74) warns that children whose academic proficiency in the language of instruction is weak will tend to fall behind unless the instruction they receive enables them to comprehend the input (both written and orally) and practice in class. Cummins (2000:13) suggests that there are two levels of communicative competence. The first level is Basic Interpersonal Skills (BICS), which is said to occur in context embedded situations. The second level is CALP, which occurs in context reduced academic situations and is required in higher order thinking skills such as analysis and synthesis. According to researchers, such as Cummins (1984), it takes two to three years of being immersed in a language to acquire BICS and six to seven years to acquire CALP.

Taking the above background into account, it is evident that English as LoLT becomes a key barrier to learning in most South African schools. It may lead to learning difficulties and underachievement in all learning areas (Landsberg, Kruger & Nel, 2005: 37). The most affected areas are general literacy (reading, spelling and writing) and mathematical competence (Kuder & Hasit, 2002:133; Guerin & Male, 2006:15).

The difficulties faced by learners who are taught in their second or third language are a barrier that evokes grave concern. Most South African learners are educated in a
language other than their first language by educators who teach using their second or third language. Learners from different cultural and language backgrounds are found in the same classroom. This linguistic and cultural diversity poses a great challenge for educators. According to Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana (2010:183), it takes considerable time for most educators and learners to achieve proficiency in a second or third language; this negatively impacts the quality of the teaching/learning process itself. It can become a barrier to learning which may have devastating consequences with regard to the literacy levels of all ESL learners in South Africa.

Barriers to learning can be defined as any factors that are a hindrance or obstacle to a learner’s ability to learn (Donald et al., 2010:3). Barriers may be located within the learner, within the school, education system and broader society (Landsberg et al., 2005:16-17). Overall, the most commonly identified barriers to learning and development are: socio-economic deprivation, poverty, lack of access to basic services, cognitive, physical, developmental and learning difficulties, stereotyping, inflexible curriculum, inappropriate languages or lack of proficiency in the LoLT of the school, lack of efficient support services, inadequate policies and little or no parental involvement (Landsberg et al., 2005:18; DoE, 2010: 13-14, DoE, 2014:12-13). This study focuses on one of the most significant barriers to learning: an inflexible curriculum. Barriers to learning arise from the different aspects of the curriculum such as the content, the language, classroom organization, teaching methodologies, pace of teaching and time available to complete the curriculum, teaching and learning support materials and assessment (DoE, 2001:19).

The effort to make education possible for all gave rise to the philosophy of inclusion. According to Engelbrecht et.al (1999: 48) and Landsberg et.al (2005: 19), IE is a social construct, meaning essentially that all barriers to learning can be addressed effectively. This philosophy promotes equal participation and non-discrimination against all learners in the learning process, irrespective of their abilities within a single education and training system with a continuum of learning support and resources according to need (DoE, 2001: 6, 7& 11; Engelbrecht et al., 1999: 65-67; Guerin et al., 2006: 115). The advantages of IE are that it provides learners who experience barriers to learning the opportunity to
become valued members of society; educators to improve their professional skills; and the society to make the decision to live according to equality of all people (Bornman & Rose, 2010: 20).

The National Department of Education holds as a premise that the key to reducing barriers to learning lies in strengthened education support services. A support system may compromise of any or all of the following professionals; psychologists, counselors, learning support specialist, social workers, occupational therapists, speech therapists and physiotherapists (DoE, 2010: 20-21). According to White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001: 6) intervention programmes must be developed by the members of the District Based Support Team (DBST) and the School Based Support Team (SBST) in such a way that a special effort is made to address the learning and teaching requirements of the diverse range of learning needs; barriers that arise from language and the medium of learning and instruction; teaching styles; pace; time frames for the completion of curricula; learning support material and assessment methods and techniques.

The primary function of these teams is to put in place properly coordinated support services for both learner and educator. The DBST’s purpose is mainly to provide curriculum, assessment and instructional support in the form of illustrative learning programmes, learner support materials and equipment as well as professional development in curriculum adaptation and alternative ways of assessment to the SBST’s of schools. An initiative from the Department of Education as an extension of the SBST is the services of LSE’s. The role and function of the LSE’s is to provide support to all centres of learning, supporting educators and parents in assessment and developing appropriate interventions, developing preventative programmes and addressing barriers to learning and development through appropriate interventions. (Donald et al., 2010:23-24).

Although these support structures are being developed, the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) has realized that the level of literacy presents a formidable challenge. Consequently, the Foundations for Learning Campaign and the Gauteng Primary Literacy
Strategy (GPLS) was launched, based on evidence gathered over the past years that two-thirds of all Grade 3 and 6 learners, who were assessed on standardized tests, like the Annual National Assessments (ANA), were reading at levels far below what is expected of them (DoE: Foundations for Learning, 2009:5; DBE, 2013, GDE: GPLS, 2010:4). If this indicates the standard that primary school learners are functioning at, it is comprehensible that there is increasing number of learners entering the secondary school system, exhibiting severe literacy difficulties.

In the light of this, I am of the opinion that learners in many secondary schools experience severe literacy difficulties and that South African teachers continuously need support to develop strategies to provide quality educational opportunities for every learner in their classrooms since their classroom contexts in mainstream schools are increasingly characterised by a complex constellation of barriers to learning and development – primarily those of social class, ethnicity, home language and ability/disability (Engelbrecht, Nel, Nel & Tlale, 2015:3).

Against this background I decided to perform an AI into current good support strategies to improve the CALP of Grade 8 and 9 learners in two secondary schools in the Ekurhuleni North District, where the SBSTs in collaboration with the DBST and, in particular, the Inclusion and Special Schools (ISS) unit are rendering support to learners, who have progressed through their primary school career, but still experience severe learning difficulties in general literacy (reading, spelling and writing) and mathematical competence. The SBST’s at these specific schools have been empowered by the DBST and officials of the ISS unit to implement support programmes, based on adapting the curriculum content, ways of teaching, multilevel instruction (differentiated learning) and alternative assessment methods, as described by Bornmann and Rose (2010: 242-244).

There are few detailed intervention and support strategies available to assist ESL learners with insufficient CALP in secondary schools although numerous policies have been developed by the National Department of Education to deal with these difficulties. Although studies (Nel, 2004; Nel & Theron, 2005; Nel & Theron, 2008) provide support
strategies for educators, these are mainly focused on primary schools. The gap in the research is therefore that few support strategies are available for secondary schools. However, these schools in this study may provide examples of good support strategies. Through AI I have pursued the best of ‘what is’ to help develop even better support strategies.

1.3 AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study was to appreciate good support strategies in two identified ex-model C secondary schools in order to identify good practice and then generate greater excellence in support strategies to enhance the acquisition of CALP for Grade 8 and 9 ESL learners. Research by Cooperrider and Whitney (2008: 2) showed that by appreciating and sharing the good support strategies, we can create greater excellence.

In order to realize the aim of the study, the following objectives are set:

i) To determine what good support strategies were used by the Grade 8 and 9 educators that resulted in positive outcomes;

ii) To provide support strategies to educators with regard to addressing barriers to learning associated with second language learning in a secondary school.

1.4 RESEARCH PROBLEM AND QUESTION

In order to get an in-depth understanding of the above mentioned aims, the main research question for this study is:

- What good support strategies are implemented in two identified ex-model C secondary schools in the Ekurhuleni North District that can enhance the acquisition of CALP of ESL learners in Grade 8 and 9?

In order to answer this question it is important to explore the following:
What support strategies that were encountered in the identified two schools can be used to enhance CALP in secondary schools?

What good support strategies were implemented by educators?

How can guidelines on effective support strategies to support ESL learners to develop efficient CALP be created?

1.5 POLICY- AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND ENGLISH SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING

The policy framework that motivated me to find support strategies that could be used to enhance CALP in secondary schools is grounded on key principles of inclusion as embodied in South African policy and legislation. According to the report of the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET) and the National Committee for Education Support Services (NCESS), inclusion in education and training implies the promotion of equal participation and non-discrimination against all learners in the learning process, irrespective of their disabilities, within a single, integrated system on a continuum on learning contexts and resources according to need (DoE, 1997a:9).

Inclusion is about recognising and respecting the differences among all learners and building on the similarities and supporting all learners, educators and the system as a whole so that the full range of learning needs can be met. The aim of inclusion is to develop an inclusive learning environment that fosters the personal, academic, and professional development of all learners. Through inclusion learners are respected and valued as partners in learning (Engelbrecht et al., 1999:48). The focus should be the development of appropriate intervening teaching support strategies that are informed by the diverse learning needs of learners. (DoE, 2005b:13).
In this study intervening teaching support strategies are regarded as learning support to ESL learners in Grades 8 and 9. Therefore, I used the work Jim Cummins on the acquisition of BICS and CALP as the theoretical framework for this study. According to Cummins (2000), research studies since the early 1980s have shown that ESL learners can quickly acquire considerable fluency in the dominant language in society when they are exposed to it in the environment and at school. However, despite this rapid growth in conversational fluency, it generally takes a minimum of about five years for them to catch up to (L1) learners in academic aspects of the language.

Cummins (2000) and Macdonald (1990) applied the Developmental Interdependence hypothesis, which is one possible explanation for language difficulties experienced by second language learners. They suggest that a child’s second language (L2) competence is partly dependent on the level of competence already achieved in the L1. Furthermore, the relationship between first and second language literacy skills suggests that effective development of primary language skills can provide a conceptual foundation for long-term growth in English literacy skills (Cummins, 2000). Cummins (1979, 1981) argues that once learners have acquired literacy skills in their mother tongue, literacy in a second language is facilitated, since learners transfer these skills across languages.

Cummins (2000) makes a further distinction between surface knowledge and deeper conceptual-linguistic knowledge. Surface knowledge refers to skills required for ordinary relaxed conversation, not cognitively demanding, and enables one to communicate in everyday situations. He refers to this as BICS. Deeper conceptual-linguistic knowledge refers to skills that are needed when reading and/or writing an advanced text which Cummins calls the CALP. CALP is necessary for academic success (Cummins, 2000). He further argues that if children do not have the opportunity to fully develop BICS in their L1, they will not develop CALP skills in their second language (Smyth, 2002).

Cummins’s (2000) threshold theory suggests three critical levels of language proficiency which influence learning. At the first threshold, children have low levels of competence in both their languages and thus experience learning difficulties. At the second threshold,
children have age-appropriate competence in one language and, as long as this is the language they use for learning, they experience no benefit or disadvantage from their bilingualism. At the third level, learners have age-appropriate proficiency in two languages (Smyth, 2002). Furthermore, Cummins (2000) claims that this latter threshold produces a positive cognitive effect, by allowing children to think more divergently. One major educational implication of the threshold hypothesis is that if optimal development of ESL learners’ academic and cognitive potential is a goal, then the curriculum must aim to promote an additive form of bilingualism where their L1 will need to continue to play a strong role cognitively, psychologically and culturally. This implies that there must be no loss to the learners’ primary language and culture (Cummins & Swain, 1986).

1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

1.6.1 Research design

The study has followed the format of an AI. An AI is the cooperative co-evolutionary search for the best in people, their organizations and the world around them. It involves the discovery of what gives ‘life’ to a living system when it is most effective alive and constructively capable in economic, ecological and human terms. AI involves the art and practice of asking questions that strengthen a system’s capacity to apprehend anticipate and heighten positive potential. The inquiry is mobilized through the crafting of the ‘unconditional positive question’ (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005). Put more simply, AI is based on valuing and recognizing the best in people or the world around us. It means asking questions and being open to seeing new potentials and possibilities in people and organizations.

AI is seen as a positive revolution in change. The difference between AI and traditional problem solving is tabulated in Table 1.1 (Watkins & Kelly, 2010:21).
### Table 1.1 Differences between Problem Solving and Appreciative Inquiry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem solving</th>
<th>Appreciative Inquiry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify the problem</td>
<td>Finding the best of what exists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study the causes of the problem</td>
<td>Projecting what might be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consider possible solutions</td>
<td>Determining what could be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop a plan to solve the problem</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Basic Assumption:**
- An organization is a problem to be solved
- An organization is a mystery to be embraced

Source: Adapted from Watkins & Kelly (2010:21)

AI has also been used successfully as a method of action research (Peelle, 2006). The premise of the method as an intervention is to elicit narratives of success among participants that then create the lens through which the future can be seen and planned. The principles of AI are incorporated in a four step framework (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2000; Hammond, 1998; Watkins & Mohr, 2001).

The first step in the framework is described as the ‘discovery’ step. This step has the intent of describing the best of ‘what has been’ and ‘what is’. The best aspects of an individual’s peak professional practice are identified, appreciated, recalled and told in story form as descriptively as possible. In this way, AI is grounded in the actual
experiences of an individual and understandings are sought into what made the particular story a peak experience (Bushe, 2007:16). Hammond (1998) describes this as gently investigating the root cause of successful practice.

The second step in the framework is described as the 'dream' step. This step considers what our practice could look like if we were fully aligned around our strengths and aspirations. In this way, this second step imagines what might be possible within our professional practice on the basis of our past stories. This step is intentionally generative (Dunlap, 2008: 26).

The third step in the framework is described as the 'design' step. In this step, the educator and critical friend, in this case the researcher, co-construct ‘possibility propositions’ that are value statements that challenge taken-for granted status quo assumptions in the practice stories (Hammond, 1998). In this way, the co-construction involves the drawing together of common themes from across the personal experiences in order to create provocative propositions that act as challenging value statements. These statements are intentionally designed to be stretching and provocative and capture qualities that are most desired (Watkins & Kelly, 2010: 46). The articulation of emergent themes typically requires the support of a facilitator/researcher.

The final step in the AI framework is described as the ‘destiny’ step. In this step, a set of intentions for practice are developed in the form of an action plan. The action planning process seeks to sustain the opportunities and possibilities drawn and constructed from the original stories. Again, the dialogue with a critical friend/researcher is critically important in holding the threads from the stories through into possibilities. It would seem that “the process is as important as the end product” (Goldberg, 2001: 57).

AI is based on the notion that organizations move in the direction of what they study. The topic for study, around which several questions are developed proves the ‘fateful choice’ and should be affirmative. This, in turn, drives the organization or team to examine and understand its own positive core values and potential positive outcomes (Cooperrider,
Whitney & Stavros, 2003: 31-32). Each stage in the AI process is marked by a task which develops from appreciative questions asked of the group. During this research, the Discovery phase was marked by interviews that elicited the participants’ own values, skills, and knowledge of enhancing CALP. The task during the Dream phase was for me in liaison with the DBST to identify themes drawn from the interview process. In the Design task, the practitioner ranked the most critical values, skills, and knowledge, in order to develop “provocative propositions” that completed the sentence: “In order to enhance CALP successfully, educators should demonstrate the values of…the skills of…and the knowledge of…” and finally, to undertook the task of assembling guidelines on good support strategies for SBST’s and the DBST to enhance CALP in secondary schools. The destiny phase was not done during this study due to time constraints.
1.6.2 Research methodology

Figure 1.1 provides a diagrammatic representation of the research process followed in this study.

![Research process diagram]

Figure 1.1: Research process
1.6.3 Research approach and paradigm

This is a qualitative study within the interpretive paradigm. Qualitative researchers seek to understand a phenomenon by focusing on the total picture. Merriam (1998:6) indicates that the key concerns are to understand the phenomenon of interest from the participants’ perspective. The researcher is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis. An interpretive research paradigm, according to Terre Blanche and Kelly (2004:123), is deemed appropriate for the study as these deals with understanding what participants in the study make of events in particular contexts. This study has relied on first-hand accounts achieved through focus group interviews and individual interviews, observations, artifacts and the analysis of documents.

1.6.4 Site selection and sampling of participants

The selection of the site was carried out by a combination of purposive and convenience sampling. Convenience sampling method refers to a situation when population elements are selected based on the fact that they are easily and conveniently available (Maree & Pietersen, 2007:177; Mertler & Charles, 2005:143). This type of sampling is typically used by educators who want to conduct research in their class or school. In the case of this study, two schools (referred to as School N, P) were selected as follows: The schools lay within my area of professional jurisdiction, making it an apt choice as sites for the study. Further, purposive sampling is one of the most common sampling support strategies in qualitative studies. Participants are selected by pre-selected criteria relevant to a particular research question (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:126). In the case of this study, the two schools had a 100% Grade 12 pass rate for the past 5-10 years and therefore are considered to be implementing effective support and teaching strategies to enhance the CALP of ESL learners. The SBST’s at these specific schools have been empowered by the DBST and officials of the ISS unit to implement support programmes, based on adapting the curriculum content, ways of teaching, multilevel instruction (differentiated learning) and alternative assessment methods, as described by Bornmann
and Rose (2010: 242-244). This was done as this study comprised an investigation of specific enclosed entities relevant to a particular research question (Flattery, 2009: 78). Thus, according to these two sampling support strategies, the schools presented the most suitable choice for the study.

1.6.4.1 Description of the schools

a) School N

School N is a public secondary school situated in the East Rand, Gauteng Province, South Africa. The school has 1,465 learners. The feeder area of School N includes learners from the neighbourhood, informal settlements and the townships in a twenty km radius from the school.

The LoLT of the School N is English and the learners are mainly ESL learners.

The school’s support structure consists of the SBST which compiles from educators and members of the SMT (9 educators) and is coordinated by a Deputy Principal. The SBST is functional and has identified the learning difficulties and requested support from the ISS unit at the District Office.

b) School P

School P is also situated in the East Rand and caters for learners with Specific Learning Difficulties. Learners are referred to the school by the DBST.

The support structure and thus the SBST consist of a multidisciplinary team (speech-and language therapists, occupational therapists and remedial educators). It is coordinated by the Deputy Principal.

The school also serves as a resource centre for the Gauteng Department of Education.
1.6.4.2 Description of the participants

The participants comprised: SMT members of the two identified secondary schools (N = 16), Grade 8 and Grade 9 educators of the two identified secondary schools (N = 9), LSE’s (2) and SBST members (N = 10).

1.6.5 Data collection and analysis

Data collection and data analysis form an integral part of this study. The researcher is on a quest to answer the research question and gain knowledge. For this purpose the data collection is a very important step in this research study. The research data that were collected during this research were qualitative. These types of data were considered suitable for this particular study because they gave insight into as well as a holistic understanding of the phenomena of interest (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2009: 367).

1.6.5.1 Data collection

A variety of data collection methods was used with the aim of strengthening the study by providing triangulation. Triangulation is the cross validation among data sources, data collection support strategies, time periods and theoretical schemes (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:379). Data were collected through sustained contact and interaction with the School Management Teams (SMT’s), SBST’s and Grade 8 and 9 educators of each respective school.

Data were collected by artifacts (e.g., examples of worksheets, learners’ books) as well as field notes of observations which I made and recorded in a research journal. Focus group interviews were conducted with the, Grade 8 and 9 educators, SMT’s and SBST’s. Interviews with the Learner Support Educators were also done (Merriam, 2006: 6).
1.6.5.2 Data analysis

Data analysis is a continual process where the researcher identifies relationships, similarities or differences in the data. Qualitative researchers begin data analysis from the initial interaction with participants and continue that interaction and analysis throughout the entire study (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2009:448). In this study data collection and analysis occurred continuously throughout the study. Data were analysed by means of qualitative data analysis techniques. These techniques provide an in-depth description, that is, a thorough description of the characteristics, processes and contexts (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006: 344-345).

Content based coding was used with the interviews, focus groups and field notes (qualitative data). Content based coding is a systematic method for analysing communication after it has been produced (Haslam & McGarty, 2003:383). Any type of record can be content analysed, while most content analyses examine verbal material like text or interview data, nonverbal material can be analysed as well (Goodwin, 2002: 411). The process of content analysis implies successive courses of action (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach & Zilber, 1998:112-114). This involves various steps of analysis: reading of transcribed data; selection of sub-text; definition of the content categories; sorting the material into categories; comparison of categories in sub-texts and lastly drawing conclusions from the results (Flattery, 2009: 96-100).

A very important stage of analysis is the development of a coding system; this involves deciding upon categories or coding units that can be used to summarize key features of the data (Haslam & McGarty, 2003:384). The content analysis process followed three interactive, or repeating steps; namely becoming familiar with the data and identifying potential themes, secondly examining the data in depth to provide detailed descriptions of the setting, participants and activity and lastly, categorizing and coding pieces of data and grouping them into themes (Gay et al., 2009:449). I carried out data analysis in this study in collaboration with my supervisor and a colleague (an educational psychologist) in the ISS Unit of Ekurhuleni North District Office. The key principle is to stay close to the
data and to interpret it from a position of empathic understanding (Terre Blanch & Kelly, 2002:139). The data analysis will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4.

1.6.6 Trustworthiness

The reliability of the data was verified by means of a variety of approaches to ensure the credibility of the study. I aimed at leaving an audit trail as a pathway of decisions that were made in the data analysis process that could be checked by another researcher (Ary et al., 2006:509). In the case of this study, reliability of data was ensured through sensitivity towards the research data and results. I endeavoured to remain as objective and unbiased as possible (Ary et al., 2006:511; Mertler & Charles, 2005:18). All interactions with the schools focused on the support strategies used to enhance CALP. I committed myself to ensuring that this study was practical and could benefit the schools and ESL learners in similar public secondary schools.

The reliability or truth value of the research was further achieved through the discovery of human experiences as lived and experienced by the participants. Documentation of the research was kept, including original transcripts of interviews, as well as any relevant documentation, which allows fellow researchers and supervisors to access information and provides assurance of the credibility and reliability of the study. Member checks with the participants were done in order to ensure that what they wished to express on the topic had been understood and recorded correctly (Merriam, 1998:204).

Credibility was established through triangulation, a process of collecting data in as many different ways and from as many diverse sources as possible (Terre Blanche & Kelly, 2002:123; Hendricks, 2006:72). Credibility was also be enhanced through allowing the practitioners in the school to view the research findings and judge them as meaningful and applicable or not, in terms of their experience. A presentation of the overall findings will be given to the research participants; in this study this included all the staff members (SMT, SBST & Grade 8 & 9 educators) and a LSE.
The credibility of the research was further based on basic principles of validation for qualitative research. These include face validity, content validity and criterion validity that are applied to the interviews with the participants involved (Maree & Petersen, 2007:217). Sensitivity to context entails the use of the relevant theoretical and empirical literature and consideration of the socio-cultural setting.

In addition, the participants took part freely in the research process and all ethical procedures were implemented, namely: confidentiality, privacy, anonymity and informed consent. Commitment to thoroughness was evident through data collection and the depth and breadth of the analysis, the methodological competence and the in-depth engagement of the topic. The effect and importance of the practical theoretical and socio-cultural aspects of the study were considered. Coherence and transparency were evident in the clarity and power of the argument, the fit between theory and method, the transparent methods and data presentation and reflection in the research journal (Mertler & Charles, 2005:18).

1.6.7 Compliance with ethical standards

Basic ethical principles were applied in this research. Confidentiality and privacy in the research process means ensuring that individual participants cannot be identified (Haslam & McGarty, 2003: 384). The participants are not identifiable in these research findings. The schools’ names have been hidden in all formal documentation and have been referred to as School N and P.

Informed consent requires that participants consent to participate freely and understand the risks and benefits of the research (Hendricks, 2006:111). In this study the GDE and the University of Johannesburg gave consent as well as the principals of the schools with the acknowledgement of the governing bodies. Letters of permission were drawn up that informed the GDE and schools of the nature of the research and of all other necessary information regarding the research. The principals were also required to sign a letter of consent in the event of agreeing that the schools could participate in the research.
meeting was arranged in order to address queries from the participants regarding the research.

The schools and individual participants enjoyed the freedom to withdraw from the research at any time. In order not to do harm to the research participants or to any other person, I considered potential risks that the research might have, whether physical, emotional and social or other form of harm and these were avoided by careful planning and avoiding certain pitfalls (Durrheim & Wassenaar, 2002:66). This was done in the following ways: I negotiated a suitable time and place to meet with the participants and data gained were accessed by me, my colleague (educational psychologist) and the supervisor of the study. As mentioned participants involved in the study were given feedback upon completion of the study at a convenient time.

1.7 ENVISAGED CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

This study has the potential to contribute to enhancing the CALP of ESL learners in public secondary schools. The good support strategies that have been highlighted have transferability and this may lead to improvement of future intervention programmes to support ESL learners in similar school settings. The practical contribution of this study lies in the empowerment of the DBST, SBST and educators. The outcome of this research should further contribute to the improvement of intervention programmes focused on ESL learners. The theoretical contribution of this study is that the findings of this research will enhance the pool of knowledge pertaining to the improvement of CALP. Most research on CALP has been done in other international contexts and context embedded research in SA is essential (Heugh, 2002). In the case of this particular study I intend to make a very concrete contribution on ESL issues in South Africa.
1.8 DEFINING KEY CONCEPTS RELEVANT TO THIS STUDY

Key concepts that were used in this thesis are explained briefly for the purpose of clarity. Most terms are school related and key definitions are presented as they appear in South African education policy documents.

1.8.1 Inclusive Education

The Salamanca ‘Framework for Action’ (UNESCO, 1994) states that inclusive schools must recognize and respond to the diverse needs of their learners, accommodating all learners, regardless of any difficulties or differences they may have and that the state should offer a continuum of educational support services to support the development of inclusive schools.

1.8.2 Barriers to learning

Barriers to learning are any factors that are a hindrance or obstacle to a learner's ability to learn (Donald et al., 2010:3). This term is analysed in more detail in the following statement in the Guidelines for Inclusive Teaching and Learning document (DoE, 2010:13-18) as difficulties that arise within the education system as a whole, the learning site and/or with the learner him/herself which prevent both the system and the learner’s needs from being met.

1.8.3 Support

Support could be defined as all activities which increase the capacity of a school to respond to diversity and learner needs (DoE, 2014:14). In the context of this study support can be defined as addressing the language and communication barriers that ESL learners may experience by the identification of good support strategies (DoE, 2014: 12-13).
1.8.4 Support strategies

Support strategies refer to structured interventions delivered at schools and in classrooms within specific time frames. The support strategies would mainly consist of curriculum support but could also be support for educators and managers. It can be used to provide staff with expertise as well as physical and material resources (DoE, 2014:16).

1.8.5 District Based Support Team

The District Based Support Team (DBST) comprises groups of departmental employees based at districts whose job it is to promote IE through training, curriculum delivery, distribution of resources, identifying and addressing barriers to learning, leadership and general management (DoE, 2014:8).

1.8.6 School Based Support Team

School Based Support Team (SBST) (also referred to as institutional support teams or school support teams) is a team established by the institution in general, further and higher education, as institution-level support mechanisms whose primary function is to put in place co-ordinated learner and educator support services (DoE, 2014:10).

1.8.7 Learning Support Educators

Learning Support Educators (LSE’s) are specialised educators who have specific competencies to support learners, educators and the system to ensure effective learning by all learners. This includes educators referred to as remedial, special class or special needs educators. Such educators should have the capacity to adapt the curriculum to facilitate learning among learners with diverse needs in order to prevent learning breakdown. These educators may include those who have developed competencies to support learners with specific disabilities who may require specialised teaching and would play a central role in the SBST (DoE, 1997: vii).
1.8.8 Language

Language is a crucial means of gaining access to important knowledge and skills. It is the key to cognitive development and can promote or impede scholastic success (Lemmer & Van Wyk, 2010:225).

1.8.8.1 First Language (L1)

This is the language one learned first, knows best, uses most and identifies with whilst being identified as a native speaker of it by others. This definition implies that a child’s L1 may not be his/her native language. A person can have more than one first language depending on the linguistic environment in which he/she finds himself/herself (Brown, 2000:16-17).

1.8.8.2 Second Language (L2)

A second or addition language is any language learned after the age of three years, or learned in a formal setting for example at school or pre-school (Brown, 2000:21)

1.8.9 Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS)

Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS) is the first level of communicative competence which deals with face to face conversations. In face conversation meaning is supported by a range of contextual cues provided by the concrete situation, gestures, intonations and facial expressions. This type of proficiency allows learners to function in everyday life such as playing with friends and expressing hunger (Cummins, 1981: 68). Cummins (2000:46) claims that it takes two to three years of being immersed in a language to acquire BICS.
1.8.10 Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP)

Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) is the second level of communicative competence, which occurs in context, reduced academic situations, and is required in higher order thinking skills such as analysis and synthesis. CALP is less visible in its semantic and functional aspect and relates to skills which are required outside the immediate everyday communicative situations. CALP skills are indicated the language skills the learners are supposed to have in order to cope with academic tasks, where the medium of instruction is different from their L1 (Cummins, 1981:68-69). According to Cummins (2000: 47), it may take six to seven years for the L2 learners to acquire CALP.

1.8.11 English Second Language learners

Several terms occur in the body of literature on linguistic diversity in schooling to describe a heterogeneous group of learners who are not English first language speakers and who are learning English and/or using English as LoLT in school. Selected examples include: Limited English Proficiency (LEP) learners; English Language Learners (ELL) learners, English Second Language (ESL) learners and Non-English Proficient (NEP) learners. These terms are often used with similar intent; however, each term emphasises a particular paradigm. For example, the term LEP is more representative of a deficit paradigm and for this reason is avoided by certain authors (Lemmer, 2011). For the purpose of this study, the term ESL learner indicates a learner whose first language (L1) is not English and who is in the process of acquiring English for communication, thinking, reading, spelling and learning new ideas and content in the learning and teaching environment (Dawber & Jordaan, 1999:5).

1.8.12 Appreciative Inquiry (AI)

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is the cooperative co-evolutionary search for the best in people, their organizations, and the world around them. It involves the discovery of what gives
‘life’ to a living system when it is most effective alive and constructively capable in economic, ecological and human terms. AI involves the art and practice of asking questions that strengthen a system’s capacity to apprehend, anticipate and heighten positive potential. The inquiry is mobilized through the crafting of the ‘unconditional positive question’ (Cooperrider et al., 2005).

1.9 CONCLUSION

This chapter serves as an overview of the research study. The introduction and context of the research question were explored and aspects related to the site selection and sampling were explained. AI as research design within a qualitative framework was explored as well as the data collection and analysis according to the AI research design that was used in this study. Ethical considerations and the trustworthiness of the study were explored. Lastly, key concepts were defined.
CHAPTER 2

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN A SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter a literature review is presented in order to clarify aspects related to Inclusive Education (IE) and barriers to learning. The first part of this chapter discusses the philosophy of inclusion with the focus on implementation in South Africa. The support structures that promote inclusion are explored as well as the challenges experienced by educators to implement IE successfully.

2.2 INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

IE is a philosophy that celebrates differences, giving everybody their unique place within society as a whole. This also means that schools should accommodate all learners, regardless of their special educational needs or barriers to learning (Berlach & Chambers, 2011). Education systems should meet the diverse needs of all learners enrolled at schools, in order to render IE to all. For IE to be successful, educators and communities need to revise and adapt existing good strategies as well as develop and embrace new support strategies to support all learners (Engelbrecht & Green, 2001:33). IE is the practice of including every learner – irrespective of talent, disability, socioeconomic background or cultural origin – in supportive mainstream schools and classrooms, and meeting all his or her particular needs. It can also be viewed as an opportunity for every learner to participate in and benefit from all activities within the mainstream school system (Berlach & Chambers, 2011). Ainscow (2005:7-8) concludes that IE requires society to accept learners not traditionally regarded as suitable for regular mainstream schools, “just as they are”. This implies that society should at all times be aware of the diverse nature of humanity and therefore geared to deal with the needs of people with impairments. Society should therefore respond to the diversity in its midst with an eagerness to learn and to understand. According to Bayliss (in Fritz, 2001:51) a philosophy of inclusion
promotes diversity as part of human nature. Inclusion should be viewed as a way of living, based on the assumption that all human beings are valued and have a right to live. It is thus a human principle that should be enforced by everybody in every community, not only in education.

The IE principle received its first major motion at the World Conference on Special Needs Education 1994 in Salamanca. At this conference, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) adopted the Salamanca Statement on Principles, Policy and Practice in Special Needs Education. This statement was endorsed by all 300 delegates, representing ninety two countries and twenty five international organisations (Naicker, 1999:14). The aim of the Salamanca Framework was to further the objective of education as a fundamental human right by paying attention to the fundamental policy shifts necessary for the development of IE (Swart & Pettipher, 2005:8), as explained in the following principles that form the basis of the Salamanca Framework (UNESCO, 1994: viii):

- Every learner has a fundamental right to education, and must be given the opportunity to achieve and maintain an acceptable level of learning.
- Every learner has unique characteristics, interests, abilities and learning needs.
- Educational systems should be designed and educational programmes implemented that take into account the wide diversity of these characteristics and needs.
- Those with special educational needs must have access to regular schools that should accommodate them within a learner-centred pedagogy, capable of meeting these needs.
- Regular schools with this inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society, and achieving education for all; moreover, they provide an effective education to the majority of learners and improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire education system.
The principle of IE is nationally as well as internationally acknowledged. In the United States, IE is broadly defined as placing learners with disabilities full time in mainstream education classrooms with special education support services provided (Yssel, Engelbrecht, Oswald, Eloff & Swart (2007:1).

The British Psychological Society defines inclusion as rejecting segregation for any reason, making learning more meaningful and relevant for all learners, and restructuring policies and curricula to meet diverse learning needs. Internationally, a move toward inclusion is in motion, policies are continuously being revised and there is constant effort to make support strategies more inclusive (Barnes, 2011:22).

Before the introduction of IE in South Africa, a medical model of intervention was followed, whereby the entire focus was on intrinsic barriers to learning (Nel, Engelbrecht, Nel & Tlale, 2014: 904). IE in South Africa originated from a human rights perspective that was informed by liberal, critical and progressively democratic thinking. It originated as part of the process of transforming the education system in South Africa to be more democratic and inclusive (Nel, Müller, Hugo, Helldin, Bäckmann, Dwyer & Skarlind, 2011:76). Swart and Pettipher (2005:19), describes the South African view on IE as follows: ‘Inclusive Education cannot simply be defined as the placement of learners with disabilities in mainstream schools where accessibility and support systems are available’. An inclusive school is built on shared responsibility and a sense of belonging, in a community where diversity and human relations are valued.

In order to make inclusive schools feasible the South African Ministry of Education appointed the National Commission of Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET) and National Committee for Education Support Services (NCESS) during 1996 to investigate and make recommendations on all aspects of special needs and support services. A final report was released in November 1997 namely: ‘Quality Education for All’ (DoE, 1997a). This was the driving force of the IE movement in South Africa. IE in South Africa recognizes that every learner can learn and belongs in the mainstream of both school and community life. IE is reinforced by the South African
constitution and education policies. In South Africa the following documents ensured the implementation of inclusion. The South African Schools Act (Act. No. 84 of 1996) makes provision for compulsory education for all and universal admission to public schools (RSA, 1996; DoE, 1997a:43). The South African Constitution sets out the fundamental rights of each person in this country. White Paper 6 on Education and Training in a Democratic South Africa February 2001 specifies the provision of education to learners who experience barriers to learning and specifies that the educational support services should form an integral part of the education and should not be viewed as a separate section (DoE, 2001; Landsberg, 2005:62; DoE, 2005b; Engelbrecht et al., 1999; Bornman & Rose, 2010:25). It further outlines what an inclusive education and training system is, and how it should be built. It indicates that an inclusive education and training system is based on the following principles of human rights and social justice for all learners, namely (DoE, 2002:37):

- participation and social integration;
- equity and redress in education;
- equal and equitable access to a single, inclusive education system;
- access to the curriculum;
- community responsiveness;
- cost-effectiveness.

In order to meet these standards different ways of meeting the diversity of learning needs must be implemented. The importance lies in the system meeting the needs of the learner as ordinarily and inclusively as possible, rather than the learner being separated, excluded, or in any other way discriminated against to suit the needs of the system (Donald et al., 2010:20). Daniels (2010: 635) argues that “It is a shift within a learner or deficit special needs model to a greater focus on barriers to learning and development, a system change or a social justice model”.

According to Nel et al. (2012:15), barriers can be intrinsic or extrinsic in nature. Extrinsic barriers relate to conditions outside a learner that impedes learning, and comprise inter
alia socio-economic, language, systemic and pedagogical barriers (Engelbrecht et al. 2006:121; Nel et al., 2012a:15). Intrinsic barriers refer to conditions within the learner that obstruct successful learning, and comprise medical or health barriers (Engelbrecht et al., 2006:121; Nel et al., 2012a:15).

The most prominent barriers to learning that have to be addressed within an IE system in South Africa, are the following:

- Negative attitudes to and stereotyping of differences.
- An inflexible curriculum.
- Inappropriate languages or language of learning and teaching.
- Inappropriate communication.
- Inaccessible and unsafe built environments.
- Inappropriate and inadequate support services.
- Inadequate policies and legislation.
- The non-recognition and non-involvement of parents.
- Inadequately and inappropriately trained education managers and educators (DoE, 2001:18).

This study focuses specifically on ‘inappropriate language or language of learning and teaching and will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

In order to address barriers to learning effectively, the level of support needed by each learner should be determined. The nature and intensity of support will vary from learner to learner. It is referred to as low- moderate- and high intensity levels of support (DBE, 2014:20).

Low-intensity support indicates provision of any specialist intervention from either other teachers within the school or surrounding schools, SBST, DBST or from every school’s network stake- holders, like therapists, social workers etc. Curriculum and assessment adjustments can be made in the classroom to allow learners at multiple levels of
functioning to access the curriculum and assessment tasks best suited to his/her needs (DoE, 2014:21).

I argue that ESL learners fall within this category and will benefit from support strategies developed by educators to enhance their English language proficiency.

Moderate-intensity of support refers to provision of transversal teams (psychologists, therapists, Learner Support Educators etc.) at district level to support SBST’s to adjust the curriculum, assessment tasks and LTSM to suit the needs of individual learners (DBE, 2014:22).

High-intensity of support indicates access to a range of support specialists and individualised assistive devices that have to be available fulltime on site. It further implies that permanent specialised facilities and programmes should be in place and the staff of the school should be mentored at an on-going basis by specialist from the SBST and DBST (DBE, 2014:22).

The aim of IE is thus to develop an inclusive learning system (school) that fosters the personal, academic, and professional development of all learners, where learners are respected and valued as partners in teaching and learning (Engelbrecht et al., 1999:48; DoE, 2001: 20). IE is about recognising and respecting the differences among all learners and building on the similarities, supporting all learners, educators and the system as a whole so that the full range of learning needs can be met. The emphasis should be on the development of appropriate teaching support strategies that are informed by the diverse learning needs of learners, and that will be of benefit to all learners and educators, focusing on overcoming barriers to learning in the system that impede learners from achieving success (DoE, 2005a:13). IE has to focus on the development of educators to meet the diverse needs of learners and the development of a flexible curriculum in order for it to be accessible to all learners. This implies that all aspects of the curriculum should be accessible to all learners. It is not just about addressing disabilities, but means responding to all learners’ individual needs. It is concerned with the school culture which
welcomes and celebrates differences and recognises individual needs (Swart & Pettipher, 2005:19). The focus should be the development of appropriate intervening teaching support strategies that are informed by the diverse learning needs of learners. (DoE, 2005b:13).

2.3 SUPPORT STRUCTURES TO PROMOTE INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Support must therefore focus broadly on the learning and teaching process by identifying and addressing learner, teacher and school needs. The guiding principle is to bring, as far as it is reasonably practical, support to the child rather than the child to the support. This entails involving the educator teaching the learner who experiences barriers to learning, the SBST, DBST, Special School Resource Centres (SSRC) and Full-service Schools (FSS) (DBE, 2014: 25).

The roles and responsibilities of each of these support structures will be discussed briefly.

2.3.1 The educator

The role of the educator is a critical factor in the success or failure of inclusive education (Forlin and Chambers, 2011:17). In an inclusive classroom the educator have to ensure that all learning programmes and materials as well as assessment procedures are accessible to all learners, and must accommodate the diversity of learning needs in order to facilitate learners’ achievement to the fullest. The educator has to provide high quality, holistic support, focused on differentiation of content, adjustment of classroom methodologies and classroom environment. It is further expected of them to apply the necessary accommodations in assessment and examinations (DBE, 2014:37). In order to provide holistic support it is essential that a ‘whole-child’ approach is followed. In this approach it is expected from all role players to work together in collaborative partnerships (Nel, et.al. 2014: 905).
2.3.2 School Based Support Team (SBST)

School-based support teams should be involved centrally in identifying ‘at risk’ learners and addressing barriers to learning. (DoE, 2001:33). The team should consist of the following members: teachers involved with the teaching of the particular learner(s) who experience barriers to learning; teachers with specialised skills and knowledge in areas such as learning support, life skills/guidance, or counselling; educators who represent various levels of the programme, e.g. Foundation Phase, or who represent various learning areas, e.g. language and communication and educators who are involved directly in the management of the school, like the principal, the deputy principal or another member of the management team. Learner, parent and community representatives should be included if topics are addressed in which they have a role to play (DBE, 2014: 33-34, Donald et al., 2010:24).

The functions of the school-based support teams are to study the information provided by the teacher on barriers identified and support provided to the learner up to that point. They have to assess the effect of the support and develop a support programme for teacher. In order to ensure success in implementing the support programme it may be necessary for the team to provide training and collegial support to the educator involved (DBE, 2014: 34).

According to the Department of Education (DoE, 2005a:35; DBE, 2014:33), the key functions of the SBST is to support the teaching and learning process by:

- Coordinating all learners, educators, the curriculum and school, development and support within the school.
- Collectively identifying school needs and in particular, barriers to learning, at learner, educator, curriculum and school level.
- Collectively developing support strategies to address needs and barriers to learning.
• Drawing on resources needed, from within and outside the school to address challenges.
• Monitoring and evaluating the work of the team within an ‘action-reflection’ framework.
• Conduct in service training of teachers in the identification, assessment and support of all learners.

2.3.3 District Based Support Team (DBST)

The DBST comprises staff from curriculum, school management and governance, financial, personnel and physical planning, assessment, psychosocial support, Early Childhood Development, Learner and Teacher Support Material, E-Learning, etc. who operate as transversal teams to support schools to identify and address a wide range of systemic and other barriers and mentor and guide schools to implement inclusive education in all its dimensions. (DBE, 2014: 25, Donald et al., 2010:24).

It is further important to note that the comprehensive support system depend on a network of Care and Support in Teaching and Learning (CSTL) which focuses on the coordination of all existing services including, other government departments, community services, private professionals, non-government organisations (NGOs), disabled people’s organisations (DPOs), early intervention providers and community-based rehabilitation services (DBE, 2014:25).

The DoE (2001:20-21) states that the key purpose and function of the DBST is to support all learners, educators and the system as a whole in order that all learning needs can be met. The focus will be on teaching and learning factors, and emphasis will be placed on the development of good teaching support strategies that will be of benefit to all learners. The DBST plays an important role in identification and acknowledgement of a school’s needs, monitoring of support programmes and providing additional support.
One of the key functions of the DBST is to determine the effectiveness of the support programmes, implemented by the SBST’s and then suggest modifications where necessary (DoE, 2001: 29, Malgas, 2003: 301).

In order to ensure functional SBST’s the DBST should establish what kind of support is needed by the SBST in order to support the learner. This team has to explore ways in which additional support can be obtained, and also assist the SBST to recognise further community-based support and facilitate collaboration between mainstream schools and the FSS and SSRC as part of the DBST (DBE, 2014: 34).

2.3.4. Full Service Schools

Full service schools are mainstream education institutions that provide quality education to all learners by supplying the full range of learning needs in an equitable manner. They are expected to provide access and achieve equity, quality and social justice in education (DoE 2001:22, DoE, 2009: 6).

A full-service school should have additional support programmes and structures for teaching and learning. It must strive towards a collaborative approach to service delivery. All educators must be able to share in each expertise and tap into that of others in neighbouring schools. It is necessary that the DBST is constantly involve in supporting and mentoring of the SBST and educators in a full service school (DoE, 2009: 20).

Furthermore, full-service have a specific role in providing access to moderate levels of support, resources and programmes (DoE, 2009: 21).

The DoE have allocated ‘learning support educators’ (LSE) to full-service schools. A LSE’s task includes consulting and working with other educators and staff, parents and various outside agencies to make sure that learners succeed. He/she may also assist in co-ordinating the work of the SBST and liaise with different stakeholders in order to address barriers to learning and development (DoE, 2009: 22). In Ekurhuleni North District we have 15 learner support educators, which are stationed at our 5 full service schools.
2.3.5 SPECIAL SCHOOLS RESOURCE CENTRES

These are special schools which are transformed to fulfil a wider function of accommodating learners who have high intensity support needs, as well as providing a range of support services to ordinary schools and full-service schools and are integrated into district-based support teams (DoE, 2001: 21).

Ekurhuleni North district has two Special School Resource Centres (SSRC). They have gradually become involved in the training programmes of the district-based support team aimed at mainstream educators. They offer workshops on how to deal practically with learners who experience barriers to learning and achieving success, as indicated by White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001: 21).

2.4 CHALLENGES TO IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN SA

Educators are the key role players in addressing barriers to learning (DoE, 2001: 7, 2005:22, 2014: 37, Nel et.al. 2014:909). It is expected from mainstream educators to meet the needs of all students within their classes through differentiated teaching methods although they are not trained to teach learners this way (Forlin & Chambers, 2011: 66).

Savolainen, Engelbrecht, Nel and Malinen (2012:51) conclude that educators’ attitudes towards inclusion are often not based on ideological arguments, but rather on practical concerns about how inclusive education can be implemented. They further mention that the application of teaching methods and assessment practices to address the needs of learners also appears to be problematic.

According to research conducted by Nel, Müller, Helldin, Bäckmann, Dwyer and Skarlind (2011:74-90), South African teachers are negative towards the inclusive education policy due to numerous barriers to learning they have to accommodate, language barriers that
hamper effective teaching and learning and a lack of support services to help them to cope with the challenges of teaching in inclusive classrooms.

Nel, et.al. (2014:910) also emphasizes the fact that most educators previously worked within the medical model approach and believe that they have to refer learners who experience barriers to learning to specialists, who will inform them how to support the learners.

From my personal experience, as a psychologist in the district office, this notion is still uphold by educators. We receive numerous referrals from educators indicating that they do not know how to support the learner and requesting that the learner be placed in a special school, where his/her needs can be met. I therefore agree with Schoeman (2012: 17) that educators don’t view support as a collaborative process between all role players, but rather as a referral process to so-called experts and for placement in special education.

Therefore, Nel et al. (2014: 905) assert that educators taught for many years in a historically divided system where the notion of shared responsibilities was not consciously implemented and encouraged.

Shared responsibilities refer to the transdisciplinary collaboration approach of IE and are grounded on the bio-ecological system of Bronfenbrenner which emphasises that there is a complexity of influences, interactions, and interrelationships between the learner and multiple other systems (Swart & Pettipher, 2011: 11).

Transdisciplinary teams include professionals, like educators, psychologists, subject facilitators, parents, learners and community members who will work together and share knowledge and experience in order to support learners experiencing barriers to learning, effectively (Nel et.al. 2014: 905).
According to SIAS (DBE, 2014) the transdisciplinary collaborative approach include the educator, SBST and DBST. Although these structures are established in most schools and Districts offices educators still feel that they don’t receive adequate support from these teams (Nel et.al. 2014: 912).

An international comparative research project in South Africa and Finland (Savolainen et.al. 2012) it was found that South African educators’ beliefs in their own efficacy to collaborate were lower than those of the Finnish educators.

Taken all the above mentioned challenges into consideration I want to highlight that educators feel overwhelmed by the demands of IE placed on them and need support in order to address barriers to learning more effectively within the inclusive classroom.

2.5 CONCLUSION

In this chapter I focused on IE and addressing barriers to learning and development in an inclusive environment.

IE is an educational approach that focuses on different ways of meeting the diversity of learning needs. The importance lies in the system meeting the needs of the learner as ordinarily and inclusively as possible (Donald et al., 2010:20). Unfortunately many educators still function within the medical model paradigm, where it is believed that learners should be referred to ‘experts for the necessary support. It is important that they receive training and support in order to be able to understand the importance of effective collaboration in addressing barriers to learning (Swart and Pettipher, 2011: 22).

English as LoLT is one of the extreme barriers to learning and many educators struggle to support ESL learners effectively in class (Piper, 2003:216-220; Eggen & Kauchak, 2010:50). According to Donald et al., (2010:182), the language policy and practice in education in South Africa as well as in most other post-colonial countries in Southern Africa has constituted one of the most widespread and devastating contextual
disadvantages to learning. Language, thinking and learning are all intimately tied together. Therefore the following chapter will focus on inadequate cognitive academic language as a specific barrier to learning.
CHAPTER 3

INADEQUATE COGNITIVE ACADEMIC LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY AS SPECIFIC BARRIER TO LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I will focus on the difficulties experienced by ESL learners due to their limited proficiency in English. As stated in Chapter 1 the majority of learners in South Africa learn in English, which is not their mother tongue. According to Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana (2002:219) and Manyike and Lemmer, (2008:62) a learner needs to be able to speak, read, write, think, learn and be confident in the LoLT, before he/she will be able to reach his/her full potential. In other words a learner has to be proficient in the LoLT.

Unfortunately, many ESL learners have limited English language proficiency, and as a result, experience barriers to learning. It is, however, not only intrinsic factors such as limited English proficiency that causes barriers to learning for ESL learners. There are also extrinsic factors such as poor socio-economic circumstances, as well as large numbers of learners in classrooms. Many educators also have inadequate knowledge and skills to be able to support these ESL learners with a limited proficiency (Espinosa in Hugo, 2008:64).

As most of the referrals received at the District Office are for ESL learners in need of support, I want to stress in this chapter that it is important for educators to use effective support strategies and techniques to support learners in acquiring proficiency in ESL learning.

The first part of this chapter will focus on the language policy in South Africa, first language development as well as second language acquisition. Special attention is given to the work of Jim Cummins as theoretical framework for this study.
3.1.1 Language in Education Policy in South Africa

ESL learners have received more attention in educational research since South Africa became a democracy in 1994. English is the LoLT for more than 90% of the South African learners, but the home language or L1 of only 9.01% of the South African population (De Wet, 2002:121).

In 2009, the National Benchmark Test (NBT) conducted by Higher Education South Africa (HESA) showed that of the 13 000 Grade 12 learners who wrote the academic literacy test, only 47% were proficient in English and almost the same proportion (46%) fell into the ‘intermediate’ category. Seven percent (7%) of learners had only ‘basic’ academic literacy. Learners performed much better in the multiple choice questions than the constructed questions, indicating that while learners are able to answer literal questions, they do not have the competence in English to construct cohesive and coherent sentences. In a study conducted by Ngwenya (2010) to correlate first-year law learners’ profile with the language demands of their content subject, it was found that the participants’ average score in a reading comprehension test was 48%. These studies indicate that lack of English academic language proficiency is a key factor responsible for the under achievement of learners in the South African education system.

In order to address the fact that alarmingly few learners in South African schools can read and write competently, exemplary and progressive language policies have been formulated in South Africa (Heugh 2013, 1). The purpose of these policies and specifically that of the Language in Education Policy (LiEP) is to protect linguistic diversity (South African has 11 official languages), promote language equity and develop the historically marginalised African languages. The LiEP was renewed in 1997. The new version stresses non-discriminatory language use and the internationally accepted principle of mother tongue education in the context of a bilingual or multilingual framework. It was intended to guarantee pupils the best possible access to and proficiency in another language (English for the majority of pupils) alongside the mother tongue of pupils (DNE, 1997).
Unfortunately the policy has not been accompanied or followed by any significant government initiated implementation plan. The policy stipulates the right to education in the language of choice and promotes multilingualism within a framework of additive bilingualism, in which the L1 is maintained while providing access to and the effective acquisition of additional languages (DNE, 1997; Heugh, 2009, 2013).

According to Kotzé (2000:1-5), Vermeulen, (2000:265) and Von Gruenenwaldt (1999:205); a learner’s L1 is the most appropriate medium for teaching the skills of reading and writing, particularly in the initial years of schooling. Heugh (2011: 128) states that the first language needs to be reinforced and developed for 12 years in order for successful second language learning and academic success to take place.

Despite these policies and research, only the minority of South Africans (irrespective of racial grouping) are educated in their L1 (Murray in Mesthrie, 2000: 463). English continues to be the dominant language in South Africa (Balfour, 2010; Beukes, 2009; Lafon, 2009; Webb, Lafon & Pare, 2010), at the expense and marginalisation of the other official languages (Heugh, 2011:128).

In her paper, *The Case Against Bilingual & Multilingual Education in South Africa*, Heugh (2009) found that educators in primary school classrooms in township schools in the Western Cape claimed to use English as the language of learning when first asked; yet when probed a little, they admitted to code-switching (use of mother tongue for explanation during contact time). Observations showed that they use mainly Xhosa with little code-switching, that is, the use of English terminology within mainly Xhosa discourse. Furthermore, from Grade 4 onwards, after these educators had taught content in Xhosa, they wrote sentences on the board in English which learners copied into their workbooks. To a parent, school principal, or departmental official who may examine the workbooks, it would appear that English is the language of learning and teaching in these classes. However, when learners are asked to read or explain these sentences, they are seldom able to comply. Heugh (2009) concluded that learners are not generating their own sentences in English. She describes this situation as almost schizophrenic: educators
believe that they are expected to teach through English and when this becomes impossible to accomplish in practice, they code-switch or use Xhosa mainly without always being conscious of this. Nel (in Landsberg, Kruger & Nel, 2005: 150) found that educators find it extremely challenging in a linguistically diverse class. Krashen (1996:49) found that most educators deny the under-development of home language at the expense of English and school success. Yet the same people claim to support bilingual education. This suggests ambiguity among educators regarding the implementation of a multilingual approach that supports both L1 and English cognitive academic language acquisition.

In order to address this challenge the Department of Education embarked on a national development project to enhance literacy in all schools. In 2003, the Department of Education investigated literacy in Grade 3 learners and found that 61% of the learners were not achieving Grade level outcomes (Centre for Evaluation and Assessment, 2006). The poor performance of learners was also evident in the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), which included South African learners in a comparison of literacy across 40 countries (Mullis, Martin, Kennedy & Foy, 2007). Of particular concern was that South African Grade 5 learners obtained the lowest scores despite being compared with Grade 4 learners internationally (Scherman, Van Staden, Venter & Howie, 2008). Moreover, South African learners were reported to perform worse than those in neighbouring countries, such as Mozambique, Swaziland, Botswana and Zimbabwe, even though a larger educational budget is allocated in South Africa (Barry, 2006). In the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) 2003, mother-tongue speakers of Afrikaans and English performed at the international average level, whilst the scores of students who took the test in their second language were so weak that the national average for South African results placed this country last (Heugh, 2011: 152). The situation has not improved over time. The report on the Annual National Assessment of 2011 (Department of Basic Education, 2011b) indicated that 6 million learners (Grades 2 - 7) were assessed in language and mathematics as part of its quality improvement strategy. The findings revealed that only 12- to 31% of learners had reached an “achieved level of performance”. The lowest results were evident in poor and rural communities. Learner failure is symptomatic of a systemic problem. The Report of
the Annual National Assessment (ANA) for 2012: (Grades 1 to 6 & 9. Department of Basic Education, 2012) reveal an improvement in Grades 3 and 6. Up to 55% (Grade 3) and 51% (Grade 6) learners had reached an “achieved level of performance” in Literacy and mathematics. The report of the ANA for 2013: (Grades 1 to 6 & 9. DBE, 2013) showed a steady incline, but of grave concern remains the under-achievement of Grade 9 learners in literacy and especially in mathematics. The most recent literacy research conducted in South Africa was the ANA during September 2014. The national average performance for literacy (Home language) Grade 9 stands at 48% and for first additional language 34%. During this assessment it was found that many learners in both L1 and First Additional Language struggle to respond to questions that require the use of their own words. Therefore, summarising a text using own words, becomes extremely difficult. It was also stipulated that learners are unable to interpret a sentence or give an opinion when required and lack the required editing skills when writing letters (ANA Results Grades 1 to 6 & 9; DBE, 2014). Clearly, the quality of education is problematic and therefore all stakeholders are obliged to participate in effective education of all learners.

Webb and Kembo-Sure (2000:306) state that “…the contributing factor to the general lack of proficiency in the ex-colonial languages in Africa is the use of inappropriate teaching methods…Western approaches, inappropriate to African conditions, in teaching languages”. Teaching English as a L2 is often done in the same way as in which English L1 is taught.

From my perspective, the lens of professionals should expand from a traditional impairment-driven frame to a broader and more appreciative and inclusive framework which considers not only those who have language and literacy learning impairments, but those who are at risk for literacy development and hence educational failure as a result of disabling systemic conditions. Through this research project, I want to provide support strategies for Grade 8 and 9 educators to enhance the CALP of the ESL learners in their classrooms.
3.2 THE VALUE AND IMPORTANCE OF LANGUAGE

Language is the core of being literate. Being literate involves more than acquiring the elementary skills of reading and writing. The sense of what literacy is derives from interactions with the family or significant others in the process of socialisation as well as many concomitant factors in the social environment (Eggen & Kauchak, 2010:50). Foertsch (1998) indicates that the ways in which learner communicate in their home cultures provide the foundation for reading and writing behaviours. If there is a discrepancy between values and expectations of the L1 and of the LoLT, learners may be at a disadvantage for success in early reading tasks and possibly in their entire school careers. In his early work, McLaughlin (1998) indicates that the linguistic environment to which the learner is exposed affects the learners’ approach to language.

A learner’s approach to language and thus literacy is culturally bound and for this reason it is essential for educators to take account of literacy support strategies in the home and the broader social environment, so that learners will have a solid foundation for subsequent academic growth in literacy. Family support strategies actively channel learners’ development through the creation of sets of experiences and opportunities, especially when the learner observes family members using reading and writing in everyday activities (Hailstones & Hailstones, 2005:1). Machet (2002) further states that for black South African learners who were disadvantaged and marginalised, learning and retaining literacy is more difficult than for learners coming from an advantaged, middle class background. Although variations in basic education levels exist within categories of race, gender and geographical location, race is still the single most powerful variable determining educational levels in South Africa. The high level of illiteracy in South Africa plays an important role in the social context of literacy, because if learners grow up in an illiterate environment it affects their exposure to books and literate behaviours (Landsberg et. al., 2005:150)

Language is thus an important tool to build and expand knowledge, but unfortunately in South Africa learners’ L1 is not protected and learners are compelled to make the
transition from their L1 to English after four years of schooling; this hinders the development of the L1.

More importantly, this sudden transition in the language of learning and teaching affects learners’ academic performance at school. If one tries to hurry the process, the learner will learn neither the new language well enough nor the other important subjects of the school curriculum. This means that students fall further and further behind their peers who benefit from L1 education (Heugh, 2011: 120).

Therefore, as Macdonald (1990) and Nel and Theron (2008:205) state it is important to maintain and develop the learners' L1 in order for them to become successful L2 learners. According to Osman, Cockcroft and Kajee (2008:7) researchers suggest that the ability to read and write academically is closely knit to the fact that ESL learners need to interact with their fellow learners and educators. This applies especially to ESL learners who have little or no exposure to English at home. Heugh (2006, 2011), Manyike and Lemmer (2007) as well as Hugo (2008) state that, ESL learners take between five and eight years to be able to learn in second language. Therefore it cannot be expected of an ESL learner to learn difficult skills and knowledge in a second language if a learner cannot read and write in his L1 yet. Hugo (2008:63) affirms this by stating that basic concepts and skills must be mastered in a learner's L1 before English as a L2 can be introduced as LoLT.

According to Lemmer (1996:331) it is important that the conditions of L1 acquisition be utilized to ensure a linguistically enriched L2 learning situation. She stated that it is unfortunate that most classrooms are not ideal environments for language acquisition. Classroom interaction is dominated by educator talk with little chance for learners to practise or experiment with language and to make errors. Moreover, language output in the classroom is usually written. L1 acquisition, in contrast, shows that social interaction has a substantial effect on proficiency and highlights the importance of creating opportunities within the classroom for meaningful interaction in the form of real conversations.
If it is true that a learner’s L1 lays the foundation for second language learning, it is necessary to look into and apply the conditions of L1 acquisition when we work with ESL learners.

3.3 FIRST LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Children acquire language to socialize, to communicate, to understand the world and to learn. The moment learners are born, they are exposed to language of their community in a social setting (Department of Education and Training: Western Australia, 2007:8). As Clark (2009:21) puts it: "Infants are born into a social world, a world of touch, sound, and affect, a world of communication. They develop and grow up as social beings, immersed in a network of relationships from the start". Children learn their L1 by imitating the language that surrounds them; they learn from their parents or caregivers. Common knowledge about acquisition is based on the two viewpoints: parents teach language to their children and children acquire languages by imitating the language that surrounds them (Clark, 2009:25).

During their first year children are often heavily dependent on the non-linguistic cues involved in communication, such as gestures, actions, facial expressions, gaze and tone of voice. Some of the earlier sounds include involuntary grunts and sighs. Smiling begins within the first few months as an involuntary muscle spasm. Gradually, infants realise that smiling and crying can elicit responses from other people and begin using them as conscious behaviour. From the second month children start using voluntary, contented cooing sounds. The months from four to seven are characterised by vocal organs, producing shrieks, murmurs, growls and shouts. Then follows one-word, two words and eventually sentences (Brown, 2000:17).

When they are able to use words to symbolize the world around them, their thinking is freed from the concrete so that they are able to think about and refer to abstract ideas, feelings and possibilities (Genesee, 2004:4). According to me this is a very important concept that educators, psychologists and therapists, who work with ESL learners, have
to take into account when developing support strategies. ESL learners can thus only learn when they understand the L2 and can use it to express themselves on an abstract level, which is later, in this study referred to as CALP.

3.4 SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Second language acquisition refers to the study of individuals and groups who are learning a language subsequent to learning their first one as young learners, and to the process of learning that language. Learning a L2 for communicative purposes requires knowledge and skills for using it appropriately, as well as knowing aspects of linguistic forms and how they have to be organized (Saville-Troike, 2006: 2).

Classic theorists, for example Chomsky (1957) and Vygotsky (1962), support the fact that language and thought are closely connected (Saville-Troike, 2006: 113). According to another theorist, Piaget (1972), language cannot be separated from general cognitive development. He argued that language acquisition is the result of the completion of the cognitive process during the first 18 months of life, involved in sensory-motor development, namely the capacity for symbolic representation and object permanence (Hook, Watts & Cockcroft, 2002: 283). If the learner has not successfully achieved this developmental stage, he may struggle with language as he gets older. From the literature, it is thus evident that language is considered to be a vital link in thinking and learning. If the learner does not have the basic structures of a L1 acquired in the early developmental stages of life, he is bound to struggle with the learning of a L2, let alone acquiring CALP during the school career (Lemmer, 1996: 331).

I argue that educators should thus not assume that ESL learners, who have attained a high degree of fluency and accuracy in everyday spoken English, have the corresponding academic language proficiency. This may help us to avoid labelling learners who exhibit this discrepancy as having special educational needs when all they need is more time as is evident in the work of Cummins.
3.4.1 Cummins’s theory

Cummins, as many other advocates of bilingual education, argues that L1 instruction in the early Grades is necessary to ensure that learners understand academic content and experience a successful start to their schooling. Reading and writing skills acquired initially through L1 provide a foundation upon which strong English language development can be built. The literature on bilingual development provides consistent evidence for transfer of academic skills and knowledge across languages (Cummins, 2000:32).

According to Cummins (2000), research studies since the early 1980s have shown that immigrant learners can quickly acquire considerable fluency in the dominant language in society when they are exposed to it in the environment and at school. However, despite this rapid growth in conversational fluency, it generally takes a minimum of about five years for them to catch up to L1 speakers in academic aspects of the language.

There are four basic language abilities: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. These abilities fit into two dimensions: receptive and productive skills and oracy and literacy. Each of these language abilities can be more or less developed. At the same time a distinction has been made between surface fluency (where the learner is able to speak the L2) and the more complex language skills required to benefit from the education process (Baker, 1996:151). A further distinction is made between ESL learners and Limited English Proficiency (LEP) learners. ESL learners are taught in the dominant language of instruction rather than in their mother tongue, but may nevertheless possess skills to acquire proficiency in the L1. LEP learners may seem fluent in English, but they may not know the language well enough to be successful at school (Baker, 1996:140).

The Developmental Interdependence Hypothesis of Cummins (2000) and Macdonald (1990) is one possible explanation for the language difficulties experienced by ESL learners. They suggest that a learner’s L2 is partly dependent on the level of competence already achieved in the L1. Furthermore, the relationship between L1 and L2 literacy skills suggests that effective development of primary language skills can provide a conceptual
foundation for continuing growth in English literacy skills (Cummins, 2000). Cummins (1979; 1981) argues that once learners have acquired literacy skills in their mother tongue, literacy in a L2 is facilitated, since learners transfer these skills across languages (August, Shanan & Escamilla, 2009: 432-452).

Many people still believe intuitively in simple theories of the functioning of bilingualism in the brain as if the two languages exist together in a balance: as if monolingual individuals have one well-filled language balloon in the head whereas bilinguals would have two less filled or half-filled language balloons (Cummins, 2005:5). Cummins (2000:6) describes these simple theories of bilingualism as the Separate Underlying Proficiency Model: it conceives of the two languages functioning separately without transfer and with a restricted amount of room.

Baker and Jones (1998: 81) criticised this perspective and indicated that language attributes are not apart in the cognitive system but transfer readily and are interactive.

This led Cummins (2005) to develop an alternative model of bilingualism which he called the Common Underlying Proficiency (CUP) model. This model explains that the two languages are separate on the surface but fused below (Baker, 1996:148). Cummins (2005) represents it as one iceberg with two peaks above the surface. Therefore they do not function separately, but operate through the same processing system even if above the two languages are evidently different in external conversation.

The CUP model suggests that when a person owns two or more languages there is only one integrated source of thought and that bilingualism is possible because people have the capacity to store easily two or more languages. Baker (1996: 148) explains, "Information processing skills and educational attainment may be developed through two languages as well as through one language. Cognitive functioning and school achievement may be fed through one monolingual channel or equally successfully through two well-developed language channels. Both channels feed the same central processor."
This concept can be explained as follows:

**Figure 3.1: Contrast between the SUP and CUP models of bilingual proficiency**

Source: Cummins (2005:6)

This idea of a common underlying proficiency helps to explain why learners with previous education in their L1 often do better academically than learners who have been in English speaking schools longer, but never received any schooling in their L1. Learners who have instruction from the beginning in a language they can understand are able to develop concepts and learn to read and write and calculate. When they then enter an English medium school, they are able to transfer those abilities to the new situation (Lemmer, 1996:330). The learner’s L1 is important as a vehicle of thinking, reasoning and forming mental images (Wood, 2002:66). In other words, the L1, rather than a second or additional language, enables the learner to make meaning or sense of what is being taught. When reading this I understood why ESL learners with no schooling in their L1 may have difficulty with English instruction; they have missed out on important background knowledge which is so important for construction concepts. This is according to me very
important for educators to know, as I often hear that they wish for black learners to receive education in English only.

The Thresholds Theory of Cummins’ (2000) summarizes this important concept very clearly. It suggests that three critical levels of language proficiency influence learning. At the first threshold, learners have low levels of competence in both their languages and thus experience learning difficulties. At the second threshold, learners have age-appropriate competence in one language and, as long as this is the language they use for learning, they experience no benefit or disadvantage from their bilingualism. At the third level, learners have age-appropriate proficiency in two languages (Cummins & Swain, 1986: 6). Cummins (2000) further claims that this latter threshold produces a positive cognitive effect that allows learners to think more divergently. One major educational implication of the threshold hypothesis is that if optimal development of ESL learners’ academic and cognitive potential is a goal, then the school programme must aim to promote an additive form of bilingualism where their L1 will need to play a strong role cognitively, psychologically and culturally (Cummins & Swain, 1986:8).

Cummins (1976) also pointed out that the cognitive challenges of the classroom demand a certain level of development in the language(s) the learner is using. Cognitive functioning and academic performance may be affected negatively if the two languages of an ESL learner are not functioning fully.

Cummins has been criticized for proposing a deficit model of language and learning and for not being able to define more precisely what constitutes a threshold level of proficiency (Baker, 1994). However Smyth (2002) argues that his model provides a useful theoretical basis for understanding the language and literacy necessary for academic success. It would appear, based on the findings of the Threshold Project (Macdonald, 1990), that L1 African learners in South Africa are in the first or second threshold level of language proficiency.
Educators should thus understand what is at stake when learners come to school to learn in a different language from the one they speak at home. Snow and Patton (2004:106) writes that ESL learners will go through a silent period during which they are unable or unwilling to communicate orally in the new language. This stage may last for a few days to more than a year, depending on a variety of factors. The silent period occurs before ESL learners are ready to produce oral language and is generally referred to as the preproduction stage of language learning. It is thus essential that the Common Underlying Proficiency is sufficiently developed whether in the L1 or L2 or in both simultaneously, to cope with the curriculum processes of the classroom. To this end, Cummins (1981) makes a distinction between two different kinds of competence: BICS and CALP.

Cummins (1981) explains the distinction between BICS and CALP on the basis of cognitive demands and contextual support involved in particular language tasks or activities. There are four quadrants namely: context-embedded/context-reduced, cognitively demanding/cognitively undemanding (August, Shanan & Escamilla, 2009: 196-197).

This internal and external dimensions of context were distinguished to reflect the fact that “context” is constituted both by what we bring to a task (e.g., our prior knowledge, interests, and motivation) and the range of provisions that may be incorporated in the task itself (e.g., visual supports such as graphic organizers). This framework stimulated discussion of the instructional environment required to enable ESL learners to catch up academically as quickly as possible. Specifically, it was argued that effective instruction for ESL learners should focus primarily on context-embedded and cognitively demanding tasks. It was also recognized, however, that these dimensions cannot be specified in absolute terms because what is context-embedded or cognitively demanding for one learner may not be so for another as a result of differences in internal attributes such as prior knowledge or interest (Coelho, 2004; Cummins, 1981).

Briefly summarized, Cummins believes that in the course of learning one language a learner acquires a set of skills and implicit metalinguistic knowledge that can be drawn upon when working in another language. As Cummins (2000) states: "Conceptual
knowledge developed in one language helps to make input in the other language comprehensible”.

The term comprehensible input was first used more than 20 years ago by Krashen (1996). He suggested that a conducive condition for learning a language is to receive input on an appropriate level to the current level of the learner’s language competence; it should not be too easy or too difficult. In the case of a young learner learning its own language, this will be mainly spoken input from parents and siblings. In the case of ESL learners, this input can come from a variety of sources and can be both spoken and written (Baker, 1996: 151).

If through this research project I can motivate mainstream educators to shape the input that each of the ESL learners receives to a level where they can use language to:

- analyse (breaking down a whole into its portions so that the organisation of fundamentals is clear)
- synthesize (placing elements into a coherent whole)
- evaluate (mediating the suitability of concepts or material for a given purpose)

Then we will create the most favourable conditions for ESL, not only to learn English but also to learn the subject content (DBE, 2015: 42-51).

3.4.1.1 Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS)

Hence, Cummins (2000) makes a further distinction between surface knowledge and deeper conceptual-linguistic knowledge. Surface knowledge refers to skills required for ordinary relaxed conversation, which is not cognitively demanding, and enables one to communicate in everyday situations. He refers to this as BICS. BICS provides learners with the ability to speak and cope with vocabulary and pronunciation necessary to use English in an everyday context. According to Cummins (1984), language competence at
the BICS level does not enable a learner to perform cognitive operations with the necessary proficiency. The question arises as to what extent the learner’s non-verbal intelligence plays a role in his learning process regardless of his or her proficiency in the language of instruction.

3.4.1.2 Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP)

Deeper conceptual-linguistic knowledge refers to skills that are needed when reading and/or writing an advanced text which Cummins calls CALP. CALP is necessary for academic success (Cummins, 2000). He further argues that if learners do not have the opportunity to fully develop BICS in their L1, they will definitely not develop CALP skills in their L1 (Smyth, 2002). The sometimes abrupt change to English as LoLT in Grade 4 delays the development of CALP even further as it can be achieved only once BICS has been acquired in the ESL. Due to limited English proficiency and difficult content, learners are forced to rote learn and CALP skills are never sufficiently developed (Olivier, 1998:32).

CALP enables learners to become effective academic communicators. It also enables learners to engage in problem solving and cognitively challenging tasks. For academic success, the CALP level of English proficiency is necessary.

3.4.1.3 Critiques of the Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency distinction.

The BICS/CALP distinction has been critiqued by numerous scholars (e.g. Scarcella, 2003; Valdés, 2004, Edelsky, 1990; MacSwan, 2000) who see it as oversimplified, a reflective of an ‘autonomous’ rather than an ‘ideological’ notion of literacy and a ‘deficit theory’ that attributes bilingual learners’ academic difficulties to their ‘low CALP’ (Cummins in: Street & Hornberger, 2008).
In response to these critiques, Cummins and Swain (1983) and Cummins (2000) emphasized that the construct of academic language proficiency does not in any way depend on test scores to support either its construct validity or relevance to education.

### 3.5 UNSUPPORTED LANGUAGE TRANSITIONS

Many learners in South Africa and specifically in the township schools learn in their mother tongue until Grade 3 and in Grade 4 the LoLT changes to English. This abrupt transition was largely discredited in the Threshold project by Macdonald (1990), who showed that learners had not acquired a sufficient vocabulary to use English as the LoLT after three to four years of learning English as a L2. This policy has also been severely criticised by Heugh (2002; 2009, 2011), who argues that L1 instruction should be implemented for at least eight years. Heugh (2006, 2011) further continues to suggest that if early L1 instruction is to be beneficial, it must continue at least to the end of Grade 6 but preferably longer, because the academic language and literacy needed for the whole curriculum cannot be developed in the first three years.

According to Heugh (2011: 120-121) there are three ways in which children can learn an additional language successfully and succeed in their other subjects in formal educational contexts. These occur in the following types of bilingual/multilingual programmes:

- **Mother-tongue education throughout primary and secondary education**, where learners have the L1 as medium of instruction throughout and good provision of the additional language taught by expert teachers. A good example of this model is the L1 speakers of Afrikaans in South Africa who have become highly proficient in English, even though English is taught only as a subject for one lesson per day.

- **Additive bilingual education**, where there is L1 medium for at least six to eight years, plus good provision of the additional language taught by expert teachers during these six to eight years; followed by dual medium education. This implicates
that some subjects are taught in the L1 and some subjects in the second language from grade 8 to grade 12.

- Very late-exit transition to second language. This model implies that the transition to English takes place in grade 9. Learners who went through this process between 1955 and 1976 in South Africa achieved high success rates in English language proficiency.

This is in line with Cummins’s theory; which states that it is important for ESL learners to learn through their L1 for a prolonged period at school. Learners who are proficient in their home language learn a second language easier. He also states that ESL learners entering secondary school should be proficient in their L1 before learning through a L2 in order for them to understand subject language.

Another contributing factor that influences learning in L1 in South Africa is the lack of resources as well as limited literature that is available in any of the 14 vernacular languages prevents learners from having a similar learning context. One of the key challenges is the scarce availability of resources both in terms of educators as well as suitable material (Thwala, 2007). As such, learners in South African schools are generally exposed to English literature before having had any exposure to literature in their L1 (Weideman & van Rensburg, 2002). Madiba (2012: 18) constitutes that African languages are widely perceived by some as being “primitive” idioms with limited communicative value, only to be spoken by illiterate hunter-gatherers, farmers or cattle-herders and useful only for culturally highly restricted local matters. He further states that people perceive African languages are not apt for use for any advanced communication pertaining to political, economic, cultural and social matters and in particular, not for anything to do with modern technology and science.

In sum, there is evidence in the literature that many factors can impact the South African ESL learners’ ability to become proficient in English. There is also evidence that ESL learners often do not succeed academically. Several authors identified in the literature
(e.g., Hugo, 2008; Lemmer, 1994) suggest that one of the main reasons learners fail to succeed at school and at tertiary level is due to their lack of academic language proficiency.

Educators can support L2 learners to acquire proficient academic language skills by creating an encouraging classroom atmosphere, using effective support strategies and ensuring several opportunities for practice (Tiedt & Tiedt, 2010: 115-116). Genesee (2004:3) is of the opinion, and I agree, that teaching ESL learners should be learner centred and be based on the existing knowledge and skills of the learners. This creates a reinsuring context in which a learner can acquire and develop new skills and concepts.

I thus argue that L2 learners are in need of support or else they will feel as though they do not belong in the education system, and will tend to have more behavioural problems, lower achievement, and a greater risk of dropping out of school (Osterman, 2000:45).

The following section will focus on support strategies to support ESL learners within the classroom.

3.6 SUPPORT STRATEGIES TO ASSIST THE DEVELOPMENT OF COGNITIVE ACADEMIC LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY AMONG ENGLISH SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNERS

The most obvious method of learning support and thus effective teaching in the classroom is communication through language. The language of social interaction influences the way a person thinks and in educational settings the language of a discussion has immense power in the constructing of the knowledge of a learner (Donald et al, 2005:104). I reason that if one wants to ensure that access to education is democratic, fair, meaningful and constructive, educators need to ensure the inclusion of all ESL learners in classroom activities. Therefore educators must plan very carefully to ensure that ESL learners, with limited language proficiency, will achieve their optimal potential in order for these learners to cope effectively with the curriculum (Cvetek, 2008:247).
Effective education calls for adaptation by both language educators and subject specialists to meet the needs of the learners who are learning through medium of a L2. It is important that the knowledge that L2 learners bring with them be integrated into the curriculum along with those of English speaking learners (Genesee, 2004:8). Schools can take an ‘additive’ rather than a ‘subtractive’ approach to learners’ language (Cummins, 2000) by creating an environment in which all languages are valued. It is to a learner’s advantage to continue to develop his or her L1 while learning a new one, and better educational outcomes are associated with an additive rather than a subtractive approach (Heugh, 2011: 120 & Thomas & Collier, 2001:36).

I argue that success in education is highly dependent on a learner’s ability to display knowledge, through the spoken or written word and that educators’ first impressions of learners are often based on the ways they use language. I further argue that due to the poor use of the English Language, educator become concerned about their own abilities to teach ESL learners through unmodified techniques such as the process of teaching the rules for using words and other signs in the academic language teaching systems (Rothenberg & Fischer, 2007: 253).

I have experienced that the instructional needs of ESL learners are often fragmented under the assumption that learners who lack proficiency in English must acquire it first, before being given full access to instruction in academic skills needed by them to succeed across the curriculum (Ford, 2015: 1; Genesee 2004:8, Heugh, 2011: 125 & Mohr & Mohr, 2007: 1).

Taken the above into account, I reason that English as a L2 will be acquired more effectively if it is learned in conjunction with meaningful content and purposive communication.
3.6.1 General classroom support strategies for enhancing Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency

For a lesson to be effective learners must be focused and motivated. Motivation is the act of providing an incentive for doing and thus stimulates the interest of someone, or inspires him or her. Sometimes motivation comes from within learners; at other times it is fostered by the educator, other learners or experiences. When motivation is low, for whatever reasons, learners have little enthusiasm for efforts to help them help themselves (Reid, 2007:14). The principle of motivation is simple: challenge learners with what is relatively unfamiliar in their zone of proximal development or allow an appropriate degree of cognitive conflict and learners will be motivated to resolve the challenge, to progress (Donald et al., 2010:99).

It is therefore a good idea for an educator to start a lesson with a motivational introduction in the form of a short activity that will draw and focus the attention of the learners (Causten-Theoharis, Theoharis & Trezek, 2008: 389). The activity an educator chooses should be linked to the prior lesson or to knowledge that the learners have already learned and understood. It is referred to as scaffolding. In its literal sense, scaffolding is a support structure that is erected around a building under construction. When the building is strong enough, the scaffolding can be removed and the building will remain strong (May & Rizzardi, 2002:207). Educators can scaffold learning by first modelling tasks and then supporting learners as they attempt these tasks (Rothenberg & Fisher, 2007:253). They need to set up tasks which challenge learners to perform beyond their current capacity and provide support strategies which make it possible for the learners to perform at the new level. If the task is not challenging enough the learners will be bored and become unmotivated: however, if there is not efficient support, learners will become frustrated and may give up (Ford, 2015: 1 & Tierney & Readence, 2000:35). Therefore, in Vygotskian terms, we can view learning as working on a tough task with the support of an expert. Learners and educators must thus interact with each other to construct understanding and purpose for learning (Fagan, 2003: 38-42). In a nutshell, scaffolding can be defined as educators giving high support for learners practicing new skills and then slowly
decreasing that support to increase learners’ ownership and self-sufficiency (Snow, 2006:14).

To support ESL learners more to understand and grasp new knowledge, differentiation in every classroom can play an important role (Tomlinson, 2014: 14). Differentiated teaching is viewed as an effective strategy in diverse classrooms as it aims to ensure that each learner has individualized learning outcomes that may be set at different levels within the same curriculum area (DBE, 2011:11). Bornman & Rose (2010:80) propose that differentiated teaching involves establishing how learners can access the curriculum, finding entry points and using complex instruction which allow learners to explore several entry points to the topic. Educators have to be able to identify learner strengths, be conscious of the variety of intelligence groups in a class and apply culturally relevant instruction methods. When differentiating between the learners it is advisable to sketch an outline of certain learners’ personalities to make sure the educator captures the unique strengths of their characteristics. During this process of differentiation educators need to take note that learners might perceive content differently. Educators should set learner specific objectives that are formulated on the academic needs, social needs and language needs of the learners. They need to realise that learners learn differently and therefore they need creative methods to support ESL learners to be successful in all learning activities (Bornman and Rose, 2010:81 & Tomlinson, 2014: 14-16). With regard to this the theory of multiple intelligences by Howard Gardner (1983) is significant. It suggests using teaching approaches that tap each learner’s individual talents as well as the modality through which he/she learns best. The multiple intelligences include: linguistic, logical-mathematical, musical, bodily-kinaesthetic, spatial, interpersonal and intrapersonal (DBE, 2011: 11).
It can be presented as follows:

![Multiple Intelligences Diagram](image.png)

Figure 3.2: Multiple Intelligences
Adapted from: DBE (2010:69)

The learners’ intelligence and learning style are determining the support strategies educators may use to differentiate lesson planning as well as assessment styles (DBE, 2010:69 & DBE, 2011:11).

Learners’ who are strong in linguistic intelligence will automatically feel comfortable and most probably will also do well in the traditional school setup where educators do most of the talking and learners the listening. The linguistically strong learners enjoy reading, writing, speaking and also listening. They will learn best by listening to an oral presentation given by the teacher who is knowledgeable about the topic (Giles, E; Pitre, S & Womack, S. 2015: 3). Other activities which can be employed to further develop the linguistic intelligence are: storytelling, telling and understanding of jokes, creative writing, peer teaching, dramatizing, speeches, computer instruction or reading programmes, story
books (listen to and read the same story), word puzzles and other word games like Scrabble (McKee, 2004:48; DBE, 2010:72).

Learners who have logical-mathematical intelligence as part of their personal strengths, learn best by being confronted with problems and opportunities to analyse. They are usually very inquisitive; love to do all sorts of experiments to reach conclusions. Logical-mathematical intelligence is switched on every time learners are expected to calculate, reason, estimate, prioritise, create goals or objectives, generate lists, support their case with a rationale, justify their position, or add, subtract, multiply and divide. (Armstrong, 2009:7, DBE, 2010:70, McKee, 2004:48; Van den Berg, 2004:154).

The 'musical learner' is rhythm- and melody-oriented; may sing or play a musical instrument; sings little songs in class; becomes animated and may study better when music is playing. According to Armstrong (2009:87), music can be used to stimulate concentration, spatial thinking, memory recall and visual imagery.

Learners, who are strong in spatial intelligence, are image- and picture-oriented, attracted to visual media and create visual patterns. The use of colour, size, symbols together with movement and sound, will all help to make visual learning more successful (DoE, 2010:71; McKee, 2004:48).

Confucius once said: “I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand” (Kagan & Kagan, 1998:4.29). Therefore educators can easily accommodate the bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence in the classroom by using acting, dancing, role play, puppet shows, designing and building. Educators also have to be made aware that most learners have a kinaesthetically preferred learning style and would therefore learn more by involving their bodily intelligence. More activities to include the bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence would be field trips, activity centres, co-operative learning, and “hands-on” activities (DBE, 2010:72; McKee 2004:48).

The "intrapersonal" learners are intuitively-oriented; strong willed and self-motivated. They have a good understanding of their own strengths and weaknesses and are
excellent in setting goals and learning from their own experiences (DoE, 2010:73). They prefer the following activities: individual planning, discussing own emotions and moods, reflecting and doing self-assessment (Armstrong, 2009: 31; Van den Berg, 2004:162-163)

"Interpersonal" learners are socially-oriented; have strong leadership abilities; mediate disputes; can be excellent educators; enjoys group games and cooperative learning. Since co-operative learning became a trend in education, the interpersonal intelligence came to the forefront and was greatly promoted with different group work activities, where everybody in each group had a specific task and the others were dependent on them for their learning (Armstrong, 2009: 7; Van den Berg, 2004:161). Educators can create opportunities for these learners to read out loud, have group discussions and peer teaching (DoE, 2010:71).

Learners who have a strong naturalist intelligence enjoy subjects such as the earth sciences (geography and the biological sciences). Educators can make a special effort to expose children to the natural environment through field trips and designing lesson plans where the identification of leaves, trees and insects are part of the learning material (Van den Berg, 2004:160).

Together with multiple intelligences, the level of functioning of ESL learners must be taken into account when educators plan support strategies. It is of utmost importance that educators ensure that all classroom instructions and assignments are eminent and adjusted to make sure all developmental levels of ESL learners’ skills and knowledge are accommodated (DoE, 2005:31). Therefore educators can do a baseline assessment at the start of the learning experience to identify on the extent of any learning barriers, as well as the present level of performance can be useful (DoE, 2005:31). During this research process I found this support strategy very helpful. As a psychologist at the district office, I do the baseline assessment and give feedback to the educators and from there we plan together on how to support specific learners in every class. Another way that ESL learners can be accommodated can be through code-switching to ensure lessons are understood by more ESL learners in the class (DoE in Nel, 2003:73).
Code switching is perceived to be an aide to the learning process. It helps learners to make meaning of difficult English texts. The challenge is to strike a balance between strategic use of a first language as a scaffolding tool and allowing sufficient practice in an additional language. Excessive use of one at the expense of the other in these contexts could increase the possibility of miscommunication between the teacher and learners (Mati, 2014: 21). Although I believe that this is a very important strategy to use, I have experienced that educators in South African schools situated in the formerly ‘white suburbs’ are seldom familiar with black learners’ L1’s and therefore cannot use this strategy effectively. Therefore, they need to involve learners and give them the opportunity to discuss and use the new content that they have learned in a classroom activity in their L1 as well as in English (DoE in Nel, 2003:73).

According to Jones et al. (2009:359), lessons must be planned in such a way that learners can comprehend new academic knowledge. It is necessary that educators allow learners to discuss new knowledge in small groups and asked them for feedback. This will give the educator an idea learners’ level of understanding. This is referred to as cooperative learning. It can be defined as an instructional organization strategy in which learners work cooperatively in small groups to achieve academic learning goals. These groups can be homogeneous or heterogeneous but they are not fixed groups for an undetermined time span (Garcia & Buhrow, 2006:10-11). Experiences of co-operative learning over an extended period tend to increase learners sense of self-worth or self-esteem, whether academically or socially (Donald et al., 2010: 89).

Motivation for grouping learners stem from Vygotsky’s belief that what a learner can do with assistance today, he or she can do alone tomorrow (Donald et al. 2010: 92). If the activities promote self-learning this rationale enables the educator to spend time with each group or individual learners as necessary (Tomlinson, 2014: 11). Learners are able to explore ideas, promote communicative competence and develop reading. Learners are able to speak and justify their point of view. They are also exposed to new ideas and approaches. By means of discussion, questioning, organisation and application, their comprehension, retention of important concepts, attitudes and interpersonal relationships
improve (Nel, 2002:159). Cooperative learning and peer tutoring as support strategies are very beneficial to ESL learners and should be incorporated in all learning areas. A basic definition of peer tutoring is an instructional arrangement in which the educator pairs two learners in a tutor-tutee relationship to promote learning of academic skills or subject content (Mercer & Mercer, 2001:59). All peer tutoring techniques are used to foster social skills, positive relationships, and self-esteem for both learners; the emphasis is usually on the learning progress of the tutee (Mercer & Mercer, 2001:59). Educators must be able to identify learners’ strengths and weaknesses and plan instructional programmes that help learners make progress (Snow et al., 1998:279). It is important to consider personality traits to ensure that the learners feel comfortable and confident in the interaction.

Together with cooperative learning I want to discuss peer tutoring as a way to support ESL learners. It is very effective to set up a buddy system (peer tutor) in which we deliberately pair English L1 speakers with ESL learners. Levin, Glass and Meister (1984 in Mercer & Mercer, 2001:59) examined the effectiveness of peer tutoring in terms of reading outcomes and found that peer tutoring produced more than twice as much achievement as computer-assisted instruction, three times more than reducing the class size from 35 to 30 learners and almost four times more than lengthening the school day by one hour. After parents and other caregivers, peers exert the most powerful influence on personal development (Eggen & Kauchak, 2010:64). Lerner and Kline (2006:115) consider peer tutoring as a concept that could be used for learning support, describing it as a strategy that encourages two learners to work together on a particular task. One learner serves as a learner while the other serves as a tutor, with a particular skill being taught and learnt.

For Carter and Kennedy (2006:284) peer support is a valuable strategy that can be used to promote access to general curriculum for learners with severe disabilities. They argue that learners with disabilities should benefit from alternate assessment as well as support instruction as a way of accessing the curriculum meaningfully. Peer support interventions
have a goal to increase both access and to facilitate social interactions in general settings (MacDonald, 2010: 16).

In using peer support as a strategy, educators should begin by selecting learners who would act as peers, then training them in class activities; facilitating participation of learners who experience difficulties; contributing to the development of the Individualized Education Plan goals; supporting behaviour intervention plans; providing frequent positive feedback modelling age-appropriate and contextually relevant communication skills; and facilitating interaction with other learners (MacDonald, 2010: 17).

In such a setting, information is tailored according to individual needs of a learner with disabilities who will be supported by peers. Carter and Kennedy (2006:286) stress that learners do not necessary lose their individual support, but rather the process of implementing peer support is periodic and followed by monitoring by learner support educators and class educators.

As educators sometimes struggle to explain certain academic work to ESL learners, they can also work together with their peers. Peer coaching allows educators to help each other improve their instructional effectiveness. The peer coaching model succeeds when educators and their peer coaches work cooperatively. Peer coaching is most successful when educators choose the coach with whom they prefer to work. In this model the coach observes the educator during an instructional activity. After the lesson, the coach and the educator identify the intention of the lesson, the strengths of the lesson and the most effective teaching techniques. The educator is invited to discuss aspects of the lesson that could have been done differently or that did not go as well as expected with either a group of learners or a particular learner (Guerin & Male, 2006:116).

The last strategy I want to discuss here is the use of homework. Panasuk and Todd (2005:220) recommend giving learners’ homework assignments that are tailored to their needs and interest to ensure that more learners do their homework. They also comment that when learners regularly complete meaningful homework they become autonomous
learners and it improves their self-control, self-discipline and self-regulation. For a homework assignment to be meaningful an educator has to plan it thoroughly to ensure it incorporates the chosen objectives of the lesson. Educators have to work through the homework assignment by themselves to know which problems learners might come across (Panasuk & Todd, 2005:221-222). They further state that a classroom activity will have a better impact if it directly connects to the homework or assessment activity of the learners, because the learners will then feel prepared to complete the homework or assessment successfully and this will make the whole lesson coherent and integrated.

3.6.2. Classroom activities and assessment

Assessment is the process of identifying, gathering and interpreting information about learners’ learning. The central purpose of assessment is to provide information on the learners’ achievement and progress and set the direction for on-going teaching and learning, being continuous and cyclical (Nel, Nel & Hugo, 2012: 48-54).

To be broadly inclusive, assessment has to be integrated as well as continuous with the teaching and learning process. Educators need to develop a conscious habit of reflecting on and interpreting everything that facilitates or obstructs learning for each of the learners in the classroom. These reflective questions usually result in the emergence of new insights and for adjusting and usually result in the emergence of new insights and for adjusting and improving future learning experiences (Engelbrecht et al., 2004:21).

The purpose of assessment should thus be to meet the all learners needs by gathering information on where the learners need support and how it can be taught; in other words:- assessment and instruction should inform each other (DoE: 2014:51).
Differentiated assessment has to be put in place so that all learners have a fair chance of being appropriately assessed for maximum learning (Alant & Casey, 2005:186; DBE, 2015: 53-54).

Assessment also plays the role of determining how effective the teaching methods and the classroom activities are in the learners’ achieving of the set objectives, especially for learners experiencing barriers to learning, such as ESL learners with limited English proficiency (John, 2006:486). When deciding on an assessment activity, an educator should consider how learners can demonstrate their learning. Educators can differentiate assessment by allowing learners extra time to complete tasks, keeping portfolios, varying the form of assessment for example printed texts, making use of visual or auditory presentations, multi- choice answers, graphic organizers and allow verbal or written responses (DBE, 2011:53; Causten-Theoharis et.al., 2008:386).
I argue that assessment should be seen as an extension activity of a specific learning experience, because future activities can be planned to allow learners to review, apply and expand on the content, knowledge or skill they have gained (Tomlinson, 2014:18).

3.6.3 Developing reading and comprehension skills across the curriculum

Reading as part of CALP is important in the learning context not only because it provides readers independent access to information in an increasingly information-driven society, but more importantly because it is a powerful learning tool, a means of constructing meaning and acquiring new knowledge. Reading is a key skill in the context of learning. Reading facilitates access to information, in order for learners to be able to acquire and mediate knowledge within the world that they interact in (Pretorius, 2002; 9-10). If South Africa aims to produce independent learners, then serious attention will need to be given to improving the reading skills of learners and to creating a culture of reading (Pretorius, 2002:11).

Research suggests that some of the main areas that facilitate effective reading include phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension (Armbuster, Lehr, & Osborn, 2001). “Phonemic awareness refers to the ability to hear, identify and manipulate the individual sounds in spoken words.” (Armbuster et al., 2001:1). Phonics is the inter relationship between the sounds of expressive language and the letters that represent the sounds. Vocabulary refers to the words that one needs to know to communicate effectively. Fluency in reading is the skill that facilitates reading quickly and accurately. Comprehension is the ability to understand, and largely the reason for reading. (Armbuster et al., 2001:4).

Comprehension refers to the overall understanding process whereby meaning is assigned to the whole text. Pretorius (2002:13) explains that comprehension is the process by which the reader constructs meaning through interacting with the text. The reader does this by using a combination of skills. These include previous experience, knowledge information in the text, together with anticipated social interactions and
communications elicited by the text. All of the above skills facilitate the development of appropriate reading comprehension.

A study by Bohlman and Pretorius (2002:15) found that the learners in their study who failed mathematics achieved 50% or less in reading comprehension, meaning that they understood half (or less) of the text, and were thus reading at frustration level. They found that the learners' marks for mathematics improved as their reading ability improved. I thus argue that if educators can improve reading fluency and comprehension, learners will achieve better academic results. When word recognition and thus fluency is delayed, jumbled or blocked, the text can become fragmented and the message can disintegrate unless learners have conscious controls in place to scaffold their understanding (Bouwer & Jordaan, 2002:124).

Reading with understanding is essential to success in society, it is important for social and economic advancement. In the current technological era that we live in the demands for higher literacy levels are increasing, creating more grievous consequences for those who fall short (Snow, Burns & Griffin, 1998:1).

Many learners' who fall short regarding effective reading skills in South Africa are ESL learners whose reading difficulty, tends to be masked by the language problem. Because so many learners study through the medium of a language that is not their L1, it is generally assumed that poor academic performance stems from poor English language proficiency. When learners have difficulty reading to learn, it is often argued that their comprehension problems stem from limited English proficiency. This reflects an underlying assumption that language proficiency and reading ability is basically 'the same thing'. If this were so, then all L1 speakers should automatically be good readers in their L1 (Pretorius, 2002:14 -16). Furthermore, if language proficiency and reading ability were basically 'the same thing', then improving the language proficiency of learners should improve their reading comprehension, but research by Hacquebord (1994), as cited in Pretorius (2002) shows that this does not readily happen. In fact it is attention to reading that improves reading skills; in the process language proficiency also improves.
To improve reading skills, effective reading instruction is important at school level. Effective reading instruction is built on a foundation that learners have frequent and intensive opportunities to read, are exposed to frequent spelling-sound relationships and understands how sounds are represented alphabetically. It is further important during reading instructions that learners understand that they have to read to obtain meaning from print, which includes that they understand the nature of the alphabetically writing system (Snow et al. 1998:4-6).

General support strategies to improve reading include:

- **Multicultural picture books**

  Multicultural literature is a constructive addition to the classroom for all learners in all Grades, from pre-school through high school (Banks & Banks, 2007:232). In increasingly diverse South African classrooms, it is critical for books to reflect the cultural backgrounds of all learners. Grainger and Tod (2003:55) write that books should be accurate and contain current information. It should not reinforce stereotypes, but rather they should reflect the experiences of individuals. Illustrations should realistically depict individuals of different ethnicities and the stories should be appealing.

- **Role-play and choral reading**

  Role-play is an effective way to support ESL learners to use appropriate language to expressive themselves (Zwiers, 2014:166). He emphasizes that educators must provide considerable support to learners in order to be able to take on different perspectives, consider different solutions and to ask provocative questions.

  Grainger and Tod (2003:56) suggested choral reading as a means of providing comprehensible input for ESL learners. Choral reading involves the recitation of a poem or short text, along with motions and gestures that help the learners
dramatically act out the meaning. The many repetitions of reading a selection provide an opportunity to recycle the language, and the dramatic gestures and motions provide contextual clues about the poem's meaning

- **Creating classroom libraries**

Educators can collect newspaper stories on a continuing topic for learners to read. If the stories appeals to them, they will gain grammar as well as vocabulary form reading it. Learners may be asked to bring in magazines on subjects they like and they can read several articles from the magazines. The internet can provide a wide variety of texts available on almost any topic (Snow et al., 1998:61).

- **Reading aloud**

Reading aloud for learners is the foundation for reaching achievement and the development of a love for reading (Grainger & Tod, 2003:60). There is strong evidence to indicate that being read to is a critical experience in learning to read and it remains an important activity throughout the primary years (Grainger & Tod, 2003:60). Books are not only friends, but create friends, as well. When educators read aloud to learners each day they come closer and closer together. It can create a space where educators and learners can be able to share a common joy that an author has provided (May & Rizzardi, 2002:350). Learners enjoy facial expression and animation on the part of the reader; this helps the book to come alive (Morrow, 2002:32). Books need to be read to learners, with learners and by learners in order for them to make meaning and develop independence (Grainger & Tod, 2003:56). Reading is a social activity. Learners who are frequently read to, will read their favourite books by themselves or to others (Snow et al., 1998:59). Reading aloud plays a particularly important role in supporting learners with reading difficulties, and the choice of the text is crucial in helping older inexperienced readers. Texts need to lend themselves to discussion, reflective reading and creative interpretation (Grainger & Tod, 2003:61).
The benefits to learners of reading aloud are vast. Freeman and Freeman (2000) pointed to a study in which educators read aloud a story to learners three times a day for a week, their vocabulary scores rose by 40%. Reading aloud to learners on a routine basis improves their reading, writing, speaking, listening and imagining skills and it improves their attitudes towards reading (Morrow, 2002:32). There is no doubt about the benefits of reading aloud to learners. Other aspects which also improve are vocabulary, syntactic development, phonemic awareness, decoding skills, and the ability to comprehend text. Reading aloud to your learners can make certain texts accessible, and the intonation, pitch, stress, pauses and inflection that you use can give meaning to a text that their own silent reading might not do (Graves et al., 2001:266; Zwiers, 2014: 188). Reading aloud to learners motivates learners to read, provides an adult reading model, develops sense of story and acquaints learners with books and increases vocabulary and phonological awareness (Mercer & Mercer, 2001:323). During a reading modelling period, the educator must be aware of a few important aspects. Educators should help learners develop mental images by describing the mental images they are forming as they read the passage out loud to the learners. Stop learners from time to time and ask them to describe images gained from the reading, ask questions and help learners to find the main idea and supporting details of a story (Shankar & Ekwall, 2003:166). Zwiers (2014: 189) refers to this strategy as ‘comprehending aloud’. It actually means that educators are thinking aloud, when reading to the learners. Learners will then be able to think like this when reading alone and thus create better comprehension.

In order to create comprehension educators’ should assist learners to select appropriate reading material. Selection of appropriate reading material for reading aloud is very important. A wide range of reading material including literature, poetry, non-fiction texts, and texts related to learners’ interest and popular culture, television texts, pamphlets and newspapers (Grainger & Tod, 2003:61). Selection and preparation for oral reading periods must receive the desired planning as an oral reading period is not just an incidental learning process.
• **Paired reading or repeated reading**

Koskinen and Blum created paired or repeated reading in 1986 (Shanker & Ekwall 2003:8). MacDonald (2010:16) advise educators that paired reading should happen naturally in all classrooms. Learners read with a friend or buddy (who is a more accomplished reader), they talk about their book, and they take turns. Each pair of learners chooses or selects easy, interesting material. The two partners examine their book and predict what it is likely to be about. Buddies and readers can first read the text aloud together; when learners feel confident about reading on their own, they can then read the passage orally several times (McEwan, 2002:61). This is a technique that helps learners who have poor oral reading achieve fluency in reading (Flint, 2010: 290). In paired reading interaction the supportive context fosters confidence and enables the learners to read together like fluent readers (Grainger & Tod, 2003:64). Educators may model this activity before sending the learners off to do it by themselves (Miller, Topping & Thurston, 2010: 423). If educators apply this support strategy to ESL learners it is advised that the buddy is a more accomplished or experienced reader and is able to support the ESL reader.

• **Planning of thematic studies/lessons which are context embedded**

Because reading is a meaning-making process, it is essential that learners be helped to make sense of what they read; lessons would be more effective, if words are taught in context and with sufficient time for rehearsal. A learner is much less likely to remember a list of arbitrary vocabulary words than words that are taken from a chapter that they are reading, writing about and discussing in class. In learning a new word, a learner must hear it, say it, be able to use it in a sentence, and notice something about it (i.e., prefix, cognate, part of speech, etc.). Repetition is essential, but always should be contextualized in meaningful ways. Because these words are pulled from the current unit, they will tend to be recycled and repeated naturally. This can be explained at the hand of the word "mitosis“. If this
word/concept is not modelled or demonstrated to ESL learners they will not be able to use it in the correct context (Calderón, 2007:145; Morrow & Woo, 2001:5).

- **Integrating language lessons into other curriculum areas**

Through professional collaboration, educators will be able to coordinate their content standards with English language standards to develop appropriate learning objectives. For example, a content objective for science might be: “Learners will be able to identify a variety of adaptations among animals.” The language objective might be: “Learners will be able to write simple sentences describing animals” (Calderón, 2007:146).

I have experienced that the integration of language into content-based subjects can become a heavy load for mainstream educators. The support of LSE to mainstream educators is therefore of utmost importance if we want to support ESL learners.

- **Presenting of oral feedback and providing extra time**

As ESL learners find it difficult to understand what they are reading due to lack of vocabulary, poor pronunciation of words, poor fluency etc.; learning cannot take place (Dednam, 2005:132). Some researchers suggest that educators make content more comprehensible by speaking or reading at a slower pace or with exaggerated expression. In addition, they suggest that educators adjust their spoken language by using simpler vocabulary words or grammatically uncomplicated sentences that match their learners’ ability to comprehend oral language (Nel, 2005:156; Reyes & Vallone, 2008: 345). Other educator educators recommend that educators should maintain an authentic pace and tone, but increase the number of pauses in their spoken language to allow time for comprehension (McEwan, 2002:64; Nel, 2005:156; Verplaetse & Migliacci, 2008: 125).
As learners with reading difficulties find it difficult to analyse words into phonemes and morphemes (Dednam, 2005:134), I agree that giving them extra time during all reading activities can improve the quality of their learning and their output during tests and exams. White Paper 6 (2001:19-20) states that the education and training system should promote education for all and foster the development of inclusive and supportive centres of learning. A concession is granted based on the specific needs and circumstances of the learner. In most cases the learner will be allowed additional time or any other alternative or adapted method of examining in order to be able to fulfil the assessment requirements for a particular Grade. In Ekurhuleni North we have experienced the value of special concessions in the form of extra time to enable learners to read and re-read the questions and in such a way comprehend better or rephrase their answers if needed.

- **Reading instruction with the aim to improve comprehension**

Reading with comprehension is of utmost importance in order to reach academic success. Comprehension can be enhanced through instructions focused on concept- and vocabulary growth as well as background knowledge. It is also important for educators to emphasize knowledge about the syntax and rhetorical structures of written language and to help learners to master comprehension support strategies such as summarizing, predicting and monitoring of texts (Nel, 2005: 156; Snow et.al. 1998). Nel (2005:156-157) further states that it is important for educators to make use of visual- and hands-on activities such as models, computers and artefacts of different cultures etc. in order for language to be more understandable. Learners must thus be given multiple opportunities to improve their reading in order to improve their comprehension skills.

- **Aided language stimulation**

Aided language stimulation is a useful strategy that impacts on how learners learn by providing them with a strong receptive (understanding) language foundation.
The educator makes use of language combined with a visual/graphic symbol (picture), thereby providing the learners with an additional cue (visual supplementation). In other words, they not only have to listen to the educator’s voice, but they also see the pictures of the words, which help them understand and remember. Technology can be used effectively with ESL learners because it tends to increase engagement. In addition, technology often provides a visual or audio component that expands context while also addressing different learning styles. Incorporating technology also develops computer literacy for ESL learners, which is so important in current times. The classroom should be managed so that ESL learners can gain access to technology, especially in group projects with mixed levels or L1 speakers. For example, by assigning roles to learners in groups, ESL learners will be much more involved in using the technology in the process of completing the project (Nel, 2005:157).

3.6.4 Supporting writing skills across the curriculum

The last strategy that will be discussed to support ESL learners is to be able to use academic language when writing educational tasks. In writing, academic language is necessary to be able to construct topic sentences, use transitions effectively, and to edit the written work (Gersten, Baker, Shanahan, Linan-Thompson, Collins & Scarcella, 2007). Furthermore, academic language acquisition involves more than just the understanding of content area vocabulary. It includes cognitively challenging skills such as explaining, comparing, contrasting, classifying, reporting, synthesizing, evaluating, and inferring (Brisk, Horan, & Macdonald, 2008:18; Zwiers, 2014:161). Academic language tasks occur in a context different from learners’ familial context, especially as grade level increases.

According to Verplaetse and Migliacci (2008:128), academic language as compared to social, interpersonal language, treats the speaker and receiver as if they are distanced from one another. It assumes a lack of shared history, it limits opportunities for negotiation of meaning, and it uses words rather than visuals to convey most of its meaning. To
further complicate matters for ESL in South Africa, new ideas and concepts are presented to the learners through decontextualized language (Dednam, 2005:129).

ESL learners find it difficult to express themselves through their L2 and especially in written form. The latter consists of three elements, namely the essay, spelling and handwriting (Dednam, 2005:127-128). Only two elements will be discussed for the purpose of supporting ESL learners, namely essay and spelling.

When writing an essay the learner must be able to process his thoughts in such a way that the reader will understand it. A further difficulty when writing may be the linguistic element which involves the use of prescribed syntactic and semantic conventions of the specific language while writing. The stylistic component which includes the use of capitalisation and punctuation causes another challenging factor to the writing process (Dednam, 2005: 28).

In addition, ESL learners must learn explicit support strategies on how to write, depending on the type of text (Calderón, 2007:34). Learners should be exposed to the various genres of writing used in schooling such as procedural and historical recounts, reports, persuasive writing and others (Schleppegrell, 2004, Zwiers, 2014: 224). Summarization, collaborative writing, specific goals, word processing, sentence combining (rather than de-contextualized grammar exercises), pre-writing, inquiry activities, process writing, studying models, and writing for content area learning as teaching methods of writing have demonstrated positive results (Dednam, 2005:164; Graham & Perin, 2007:134). Learning to write in English can be complicated as spoken English has approximately 5000 different possible syllables. Instead of representing each one with a symbol in the writing system, written English relies on an alphabetic system that represents the parts that make up a spoken syllable, rather than representing the syllable as a unit. For example learning a syllabic system like the Japanese 'Katakana" is straightforward, as the syllables are pronounceable, but take for instance a word like "electric" and "electricity", where the last sound in "electric" is pronounced as a "k", but in "electricity" as a "s". In English rather than preserving one-letter-to-one-sound correspondence, the
spelling of the word is preserve, which makes writing and reading English more difficult for ESL learners (Dednam, 2005:127-128; Snow et.al., 1998:22-24; Walqui & DeFazio, 2003:5). To conclude this section it is important to note that writing is essential in a reading curriculum because it doubles as an assessment of reading comprehension.

3.7 CONCLUSION

Although the constitution of South Africa makes provision for the language rights of all citizens, the LoLT in most schools is English, which causes a significant barrier to learning for many learners (DoE, 2001:19). It is estimated that about 78% of learners in South Africa switch to English in Grade 4 (Heugh, 2011: 153). Therefore they do not receive education in their L1 for at least six to eight years as stressed by Heugh (2002, 2009 & 2011). The work of Cummins (1981, 2000 & 2005) indicates that a learner needs at least six to seven years to acquire CALP. He further emphasized that reading and writing skills acquired initially through L1 provide a foundation upon which strong English language development can be built.

The new Language-in-Education Policy adopted by the South African Government in 1997 promotes additive bilingualism/multilingualism, that is, the maintenance of L1 and the learning of at least one additional language. The policy provides guidelines on the teaching of indigenous African languages or home languages as subjects of study in their own right and as media of instruction. In terms of this policy, home languages, especially indigenous African languages, may be studied as subjects up to Grade 12. The policy requires that these languages be used as media of instruction for at least three years, after which learners switch to an additional language. However, according to the South African Schools Act (Act of 1996), the school governing bodies have the power to decide which language should be used as the LoLT in their schools, with the result that in most ex-model C schools English is used as the only medium of instruction from Grade 1 (Madiba, 2012: 20 ).
According to Heugh (2011;148) the implementation of the curriculum in South Africa, is promoting early-exit bilingualism rather than additive or late-exit bilingualism, which is not conducive to the development of academic language proficiency.

The above mentioned situation seems to be the reason why learners in many secondary schools experience inadequate academic language proficiency.

It is expected of educators to address the inadequate academic language proficiency of ESL learners through differentiation of content, adjustment of classroom methodologies and classroom environment as well as applying the necessary accommodations in assessment and examinations (DBE: 2014: 37).

Taken all these challenges into account, I argue that educators may feel overwhelmed and need support to revise existing strategies and implement new ones. Therefore I have chosen Appreciative Inquiry as research method to determine what good strategies were used by Grade 8 and 9 educators that resulted in positive outcomes. This will be discussed in the next chapter.
CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the research design and methodology will be described according to the phases of an AI. Aspects discussed include: the motivation for the selection of the research methodology, qualitative research as research approach, AI as research design and the selection of the school and participants.

4.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM AND APPROACH

A paradigm is a way of observing the world. I decided to conduct this research from the perspective of the interpretive paradigm. Nieuwenhuis (2007:47) describes a paradigm as a set of assumptions or beliefs about fundamental aspects of reality which gives rise to a particular view of the world – it addresses fundamental assumptions about ontology and epistemology.

This implies that paradigms serve as lenses by which reality is interpreted. According to Lincoln and Guba (2002 in Barnes, 2011:36) there are three concepts that help define a paradigm: ontology, epistemology and methodology. Each of these concepts is briefly explained below:

4.2.1 Ontology (belief system about the nature of reality)

According to the ontological position, we accept that the individual’s subjective understanding of the social world exists independently and it is only accessible via the participant’s interpretation which may be further interpreted by the researcher (Taber, 2007:37). Therefore I relied on the participants to help me to understand their context
and ultimately their needs, in order to enhance CALP for ESL learners in secondary schools.

4.2.2 Epistemology (the relationship between knower and known)

When dealing with this concept in this study, the following questions is asked, “What is the nature of our knowledge?” and “How can that knowledge be acquired?” (Taber, 2007:37). The nature of knowledge in this study was the eliciting of the participants’ own values, skills, and knowledge of enhancing CALP. The most critical values, skills, and knowledge were acknowledged, in order to develop “provocative propositions” that completed the sentence: “In order to enhance CALP successfully, educators should demonstrate the values of…the skills of…and the knowledge of…”

Through the process of AI participants and I were knowledge makers instead of knowledge users and through a process of continuous reflection and collaboration, the participants developed knowledge pertaining to enhancing CALP in secondary schools.

4.2.3 Methodology

The question asked in relation to this concept is “How best possible can the desired knowledge and understanding be obtained?” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:9). Through the AI research approach I was able to get a better understanding of the good support strategies that already exist in two astoundingly performing secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North and a positive way forward to enhance the CALP of Grade 8 and 9 ESL learners could be developed.

The interpretive paradigm is targeted to understand a phenomenon, a process or a particular point of view from the perspective of those involved (Ary et al., 2006:463). The central purpose of the interpretive paradigm is to understand the world or experiences of the participants. In this case the aim was to know what support strategies can be used to enhance CALP of Grade 8 and 9 ESL learners.
In this study, qualitative research has been used to understand and explain the phenomena of good support strategies to enhance the CALP of ESL learners in Grade 8 and 9 in South African secondary schools. According to McLeod (2001), qualitative research provides the researcher with the potential to discover and obtain new insights into problems.

Description, understanding and interpretation are the main focus of qualitative research (Merriam, 1998:6) and it allowed me to explore the success stories of the participants (educators) in the study. In this research I wanted to discover and explore the good support strategies related to enhancing CALP of learners in Grade 8 and 9 in order to provide ESL learners with effective support to achieve their true potential and overcome the language barrier they experience.

Qualitative research methods are designed to help researchers understand people and the social and cultural contexts in which they live (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:315; Pillay, 2004:294). Qualitative research is further viewed as scientific research that consists of an investigation that seeks answers to questions. The researcher systematically uses a predefined set of procedures to answer the questions and collect evidence. Findings are produced from data analysis that is not predetermined and that is applicable beyond the immediate boundaries of the study. Qualitative research involves the use of qualitative data obtained from interviews, documents, participant observation, and the researcher’s impressions and reactions to understand and explain the social phenomena (Nieuwenhuis, 2007:51; Pillay, 2004:294).

The search for qualitative data is on-going, and the relationship between the researcher and participant is reciprocal. According to Govender (2003:111), the best way to do qualitative research is to become an active observer. The researcher observes the effectiveness, limitations, opportunities, shortcomings and improvement possibilities. The ultimate aim of qualitative research is to offer a perspective of a situation and to provide a well-written research report that reflects the researcher's ability to illustrate or describe the corresponding phenomenon. One of the greatest strengths of the qualitative
approach is the richness and depth of explorations and descriptions. The researcher wants to provide a well-written rich and in depth research report that can explore the phenomenon in great detail. The major purpose of any research is to provide principled areas for knowing, to guide practice and to advance methodology (Freebody, 2003:20; Loots, 2006:41). Qualitative researchers accept and acknowledge their own role in constructing the social realities that they describe in research reports (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2005: 14). Therefore, I will include my own experiences in the research report.

According to Merriam (1998:6-8) the essential features of qualitative approaches are:

- Researchers develop an understanding of the meaning participants have constructed around the research problem.
- Researchers are the primary instrument of data collection and analysis.
- Researchers are continually engaging in fieldwork.
- Researchers use inductive research support strategies to build and link abstractions, concepts, hypotheses or theories.
- Researchers produce rich descriptive analysis to data.

This research project was qualitative in the form of AI, where the focus was on the good support strategies that already exist to enhance CALP. By acknowledging and spreading these support strategies to other educators, it will hopefully lead to more good support strategies in more schools.

4.3 MOTIVATION FOR SELECTION OF APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY

Taking into account the Annual National Assessment results of 2014, it is clear that South African learners achieve below acceptable levels in reading, writing and arithmetic (DBE, 2014). The national average performance for literacy (L1) Grade 9 stands at 48 % and for first additional language 34%.
The end of Grade 9 is an exit point for certain learners and the start of the Further Education and Training band for others. This situation places enormous pressure on educators who struggle to find congruency and validity. It seems as though they find education challenging and, at times, lifeless (Brook, 2009: 46). In these times, educators can lose their sense of purpose and may feel hopeless. Moreover, this negative, problem-centred way of being can create deficit-based thinking on the part of the educators.

By using AI as a research method I wanted to explore what possibilities exist if the lens shifts from seeing the situation as a problem to be solved to seeing it as a multidimensional miracle to be appreciated (Cooperrider & Srivasta, 1987:323).

AI used in curriculum renewal is based on the principle that educators can innovate through reflective inquiry better support strategies (Jacobs & Brandt, 2012). It is an organisation development philosophy described by Cooperrider and Whitney (2005:86) that can be applied with great effect to educational institutions.

One of the main assumptions of the AI approach is the premise that researchers inquiring into problems in their own and others’ practices most probably will find more problems, but researchers attempting to appreciate what is best in current practices, will more likely keep on discovering more and more of what is good for a next practice (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005:319).

AI focuses on the peak experiences of people and as Maslow’s extensive studies on peak experiences reveal; people who most often recognise their peak experiences are among the healthiest people, since they frequently seek to increase their experience of this phenomenon (Maslow, 1962).

The characteristics inherent in peak experiences are referred to as “being-values” (Maslow, 1970:149). It includes “aliveness, wholeness, necessity, completion justice, order, richness and self-sufficiency” (Maslow, 1967; 108-109).
Maslow further states that people who regularly experience these experiences become self-actualized people (Maslow 1968, a). Self-actualization can be defined as the full use and exploitation of talents, capacities and potentialities. Self-actualized people seem to be doing the best that they are capable of doing (Maslow, 1970: 150).

I thus argue that AI research findings can be used to reconstruct actual practices into a better next practice (Cooperrider & Whitney 2008: 2). AI looks for what has made an organization vital and vibrant and then attempts to build upon those life-giving forces to create a positive vision of the organization's future (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2008: 2-3).

AI is seen as a positive revolution in change and differs from traditional problem solving (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005: 320). AI is designed to place participants in a fundamentally different and positive stance. It is a process in which people, and in the case of this research study, educators, are supported to acknowledge their achievements (Srivasta & Cooperrider, 1990).

According to Lewis-Enright, Crafford and Crous (2009:3), this approach focuses on what the group ultimately wants (possibility thinking), rather than what stands in the way of what they want (deficit thinking). Taking this approach into account it is more important to me as researcher to focus on the positive aspects of what educators do, than to focus on the problems they experience.

As this study’s focus is on schools and educators, I have researched studies done on school improvement or reform and they suggest that the traditional problem-centred way to address concerns failed as it made people felt useless, empty, failures and not worthwhile (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005: 320-321). In essence AI is a deconstruction of deficit thinking through a refrained positive perspective (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005: 320; Garcia & Guerra, 2004).

AI is defined as the search for knowledge and the theory of intentional collective action to help change the vision and determination of a group (Busche, 1995:15). It is based on
the hypothesis that social forms will always develop towards images that are affirming and life-giving (Lewis-Enright et al., 2009:3).

According to Valencia (1997), the primary motivation for generating a positive view is AI’s line of inquiry that is contrasted to the tradition of problem-based research studies that highlight an organization’s deficits. Generative language and questions are used to unleash all participants’ capacities. Generative language is evident in that inquiry used in AI is heliotropic in nature: “When you change the way you look at things, the things you look at changes” (Dyer, 2004:4). Whitney (1998) also emphasises that if an organization wants to change for the best, the language and dialogue among the people must change to support participation, involvement and positive interaction.

Due to the above reasons I chose to use AI as research method. The schools in Ekurhuleni North District are achieving good Grade 12 results and the district is perceived to be highly functional within the framework of the Gauteng Department of Education. If, through this study I can highlight the good support strategies that are used to improve CALP, educators may be motivated and inspired and may achieve even better results in future.

4.3.1 The process of Appreciative Inquiry

Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987:144-156) describe the appreciative mode of inquiry as a way of living with, being with, and directly participating in the varieties of a social organization. The researcher walks in with the attitude of "appreciative objectivity". This attitude is value-laden with the assumption that whatever one finds, one will settle toward embracing it as inherently good and in so doing will be able to recognize its latent possibilities for the future.
According to them the process of AI can be simply stated in two basic steps:

a) The research task is to identify and value the best of ‘what is’ within the organization. In the first step the purpose of valuing is to tap into the key themes and forces important to the organization.

b) The research task then visualizes what ‘might be’. When the best of what is has been identified and the values are recounted, the mind naturally begins to search beyond this; it begins to envision new possibilities. Valuing the best of what are leads to envisioning what might be. Envisioning means allowing oneself to be inspired by what one sees.

AI looks for those peak moments in organizational existence when the individuals felt most alive, effective, and potent. Then, by building on these experiences, it describes the ideal-type ideas of what can be produced which challenge the school/organization to become better than they are at their current level by visioning from the best of what already exists. The theory behind provocative propositions is that change comes from doing more of what you are already doing when operating at one’s best. Preoccupation on the organization’s problems, weaknesses and barriers may undermine the process of identifying the positive energy that is required to enable the organization to move to a new level of operation (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987: 130).

4.3.2 Four operating principles of Appreciative Inquiry

From the above, the, four principles of AI as a form of action research can be stated as such (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987; Cooperrider, 1989):

4.3.2.1 Appreciative

This basic principle assumes that every social system functions to some degree and that it is not in a complete state of entropy. A primary task of research is to discover, describe, and explain those social innovations, however small, which serve to give ‘life’ to the
system and activate members’ competencies as more fully functioning participants in the formation and transformation of organizational realities. That is, the appreciative approach takes its inspiration from the current state of ‘what is’ and seeks a comprehensive understanding of the factors and forces of organizing (conceptual, operational, cultural) that serve to intensify the total potential of an organization in ideal-type human and social terms.

I argue that by appreciating and sharing the good support strategies of educators, used in this study, to enhance CALP, more good support strategies will be found and applied in other schools.

4.3.2.2 Applicable

AI is practical. Its results are concretely beneficial to the organization under review. An applicable organizational analysis leads to new understandings that can be used, applied and thereby validated in action. In other words this research study will positively enhance the support strategies of educators involved with teaching ESL learners.

4.3.2.3 Provocative

AI holds that an organization is, in fact, an open-ended, uncategorized system capable of becoming better than what it is at any given moment, and knowing how to actively take part in guiding its own development. Appreciative knowledge of what is may propose what might be, and such knowledge can be used to generate images of realistic developmental opportunities that can be experimented with on a broader scale. In this sense this study may produce knowledge of efficient support strategies to support all learners struggling with learning difficulties.
4.3.2.4 Collaborative

Since the intent of AI is to identify the potential of organizational life it should be collaborative. This overarching principle points to the assumed existence of an inseparable relationship between the process of inquiry and its content. A collaborative relationship between the researcher and members of an organization is, therefore, deemed essential on the basis of both epistemological and practical/ethical grounds.

A unilateral approach to this specific study is needed as we want to bring good support strategies to light in order to support ESL learners more efficiently.

4.3.3 Appreciative Inquiry as methodology

AI begins with the telling and recording of life-centric stories. Given that our lives are expressed continuously and collectively in the stories we tell each other every day, stories have power to be used as catalysts of change. The seeds of change are embedded in the stories that are told. In this way, change happens the moment we begin to inquire (Bushe & Kassam, 2005:176).

The momentum for sustainable change requires positive affect and an interpersonal connection to a colleague or critical friend (Giles, 2008; Giles & Alderson, 2004; 2008; Mantel & Ludema, 2000). A critical friend can be a colleague or associate with whom a trusting relationship exists. In addition, the critical friend must have an understanding of the appreciative process and must be skilful in seeking for comprehensive aspects of another’s stories (Giles & Alderson, 2004; 2008).

The first phase should be a search for good practices that already exist by appreciating the best of ‘what is’ (Henderson & Gomik, 2007:270). It is usually called the ‘discovery’ phase. The best aspects of individuals’ peak professional practices are identified, appreciated, recalled and told in story form as descriptively as possible. For example, in this study I wanted to discover the existing good support strategies to enhance CALP for
Grade 8 and 9 ESL learners and thus interviewed the participants about their own best experiences (Bushe, 2011: 3). Hammond (1998) describes this as gently investigating the root cause of successful practice.

I have used the following foundational (or generic) questions to guide me through the interviews with the participants to explore their good support strategies (Cooperrider, et al., 2000: 23):

a) Describe an optimum experience in your class /school—a time when you were most successful and involved in teaching ESL learners. What strategy did you use that contributed to the success that was experienced by ESL learners?

b) What is it that you most value about yourself, your work, and your school, taking into consideration how you are supporting ESL learners?

c) What are the core factors that give life to your support system for ESL learners, without which the SBST would cease to exist?

The second phase is to envision “what might be”. It is described as the ‘dream’ phase. During this phase consideration is given to what the organization’s productivity could look like if everyone were completely aligned around their strengths and aims. In this way, this second phase imagines what might be possible within our professional practice on the basis of our past success stories/ support strategies. This step is intentionally generative (Henderson & Gornik, 2007:270). During this phase participants have taken into account theoretical knowledge of support strategies to ESL learners. During this second phase interviews I asked the following question:

What might be the ideal support strategies to improve CALP if we take into account the theoretical knowledge, that educators support ESL learners best by:

- Scaffolding
- Extensive knowledge of every learner
- Cooperative learning/Peer coaching/ Code switching
- Differentiation
- Continuous and differentiated assessment tasks
- Integrating language lessons into other curriculum areas
- Multicultural picture books
- Role-play and Choral reading
- Creating classroom libraries
- Reading aloud
- Paired reading or repeated reading
- Presenting of oral feedback and providing extra time
- Support spelling and purposeful writing
- Aided language stimulation and vocabulary enhancement by using technology, models etc. (cf. par. 3.6.1; 3.6.2; 3.6.3).

The third phase amplifies and adapts what is working well in the classroom and can be implemented in secondary schools to enhance CALP. The focus is on innovative life-giving forces. It is described as the ‘design’ phase. During this phase, the researcher and participants co-construct ‘possibility suggestions’ that are value statements and that challenge taken-for-granted status quo expectations in the descriptions of peak experiences (Giles & Alderson, 2008; Hammond, 1998). In this way, the co-construction involves the drawing together of common themes from across the personal experiences in order to create stimulating propositions that act as challenging value statements. These statements are intentionally designed to be extending and stimulating, and capture qualities that are most desired (English et al., 2003). The articulation of emergent themes typically requires the support of a facilitator or critical friend, in the case of this study, my supervisor, the Psychologist and Inclusion Specialists in the ISS Unit of Ekurhuleni North District Office. Guidelines on support strategies were developed during this phase.

The final phase in the AI framework is described as the ‘destiny’ phase and is intended to implement the “ideal practices” (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987:148).
By using the results of this research, I have attempted to generate good support strategies to be implemented in secondary schools in order to improve the CALP of ESL learners. The process can be explained graphically as follows:

Figure 4.1: Appreciative Inquiry 4-D Model
Adapted from Watkins & Mohr (2001).
A slightly different model illustrating Appreciative Inquiry processes is the 4-I model (Figure 4.4), developed by Mohr and Jacobsgaard (Watkins & Mohr, 2001). Its phases are Initiate, Inquire, Imagine, and Innovate. The models, although similar, have two major differences: (1) they use different language to describe the various phases, and (2) they present a different explanation of the phases. The 4-D model has a Destiny phase that relates to implementation, while the 4-I model has an extra early planning step, Initiate, and embeds implementation into the Innovate phase.

These subtle differences have evolved from different facilitators’ experiences implementing Appreciative Inquiry with different audiences and in varying contexts. This continuous adaptation is an illustration of the dynamic nature of Appreciative Inquiry and its models and applications. Regardless of the model used, neither prescribes a rigid process. For example, when AI is implemented in real-world settings, the various phases often overlap and repeat themselves in unpredictable ways, and some steps may fall into various stages (Watkins & Mohr, 2001)
Figure 4.2: Appreciative Inquiry 4-I Model

Source: Adapted from Watkins & Mohr (2001).
The following five core principles, based on the theories of social constructionism, are crucial in order to understand the nature of the methodology of AI.

1. Constructivist Principle: Related to the notion that multiple realities exist, based on perceptions and shared understandings, this principle suggests that what is known about an organization and the organization’s actual destiny are interwoven.

2. Principle of Simultaneity: As reality is a developing social construction, it is possible through inquiry to influence the reality an organization creates for itself. Inquiry and change are simultaneous and inquiry is intervention. Thus, the nature of this inquiry is critically important as the very first questions the researcher will ask will set the stage for what the educators will discover and learn and the way they will co-construct the future, in this case, the enhancement of CALP in the classroom.

3. Poetic Principle: As reality is a human construction, an organization is like an open book in which its story is being co-authored continually by its members and those who interact with them. Consequently, members are free to choose which part of the story to study or inquire about—its problems and needs, or its moments of creativity or joy, or both. In the case of the nature of this study, I have focused on the positive principles that will be discovered.

4. Anticipatory Principle: This principle postulates that the image an organization has of its future guides that organization’s current behaviour. Thus, an organization’s positive images of its future will anticipate, or lead to, positive actions.

5. Positive Principle: This principle arose from wide experience with AI. Early AI practitioners found that the more positive the questions they asked were, the more engaged and excited participants were and the more successful and longer lasting the change effort was. This is in large part because human beings and organizations want to turn toward positive images that give them energy and nourish happiness (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2000; Bushe, 2012: 88).
Based on these principles, eight assumptions form the foundation for AI’s processes and methods (Hammond, 1998: 20–21):

a) In every society, organization, or group, something works.
b) What we focus on becomes our reality.
c) Reality is created in the moment, and there are multiple realities.
d) The act of asking questions of an organization or group influences the group in some way.
e) People have more confidence and comfort to journey to the future (the unknown) when they carry forward parts of the past (the known).
f) If we carry parts of the past forward, they should be what are best about the past.
g) It is important to value differences.
h) The language we use creates our reality.

These principles and assumptions underlie both the philosophy of AI and the ways in which it is conducted.

During this specific study I focused on the affirmative support strategies that educators already use, and it was envisaged that this would lead to contentment among educators and the officials in the District of Ekurhuleni North. I further envisaged that this would then lead to greater determination to construct even better support strategies to support ESL learners. During the following paragraphs I focus on how the data were collected and analysed.

4.3.4 Critique against using Appreciative Inquiry

It is worth highlighting that AI is not suitable for research into problematic social phenomena, such as racism, bullying etc. It is also not suitable if the research participants don’t have knowledge or experience of the topic under inquiry and cannot tell life-giving stories.
Lastly, researchers must acknowledge that it requires commitment to implementation on behalf of all participants, especially those in positions of responsibility, as the main purpose of AI is to introduce and implement change. It thus goes beyond the normal responsibility of research (Shuayb, Sharp, Judkins & Hethering, 2009: 14).

4.4 DATA COLLECTION

4.4.1 Site selection and sampling of participants

As stated in Chapter 1 the selection of the sites were carried out by a combination of purposive and convenience sampling (Maree & Pietersen, 2007b:177; Mertler & Charles, 2005:143). In the case of this study, two schools (referred to as School N and P) were selected as follows: The schools lay within my area of professional jurisdiction, making it an apt choice as sites for the study. Further, purposive sampling is one of the most common sampling practices in qualitative studies (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:126). In the case of this study, the two schools have had a 98%-100% Grade 12 pass rate for the past 5-10 years and therefore are considered to be implementing good support strategies to develop the CALP of ESL learners. This was done as this study comprised a socio-cultural investigation of specific enclosed entities relevant to the particular research question (Flattery, 2009: 78). Thus, according to these two sampling practices, the schools presented the most suitable choice for the study. As one of the psychologists working in the District Office I am responsible for the support rendered to the learners in these schools, which made it convenient for me to do observation and make the necessary field notes.

4.4.1.1 Description of the schools

a) School N

School N is a public secondary school situated in the East Rand, Gauteng Province, South Africa. The school has 1 465 learners. The average class size is 45 learners per
School N is situated in a residential area, about 10 km from the central business district. Significant changes occurred in the demographics of the school and the learner population over the last eight years. Previously the school offered technical subjects like fitting and turning/sheet and metal work as well as woodwork. Due to the increase in numbers these workshops were converted into normal classrooms. The feeder area of School N includes learners from the neighbourhood, informal settlements and the townships in a 20 km radius from the school.

The school has 58 educators, including the principal and deputies. There are 22 white-, one Indian-, one coloured- and 34 black educators. The educators’ qualifications vary according to years’ training and experience. The school is not wealthy; subsidies are given by the DoE, but the school governing body has to work hard to manage funds effectively. Financial support from parents is limited. Taken these circumstances in to account the matric results of 98%- 100% for the past ten years is phenomenal.

The school’s support structure consists of the SBST which compiles from educators and members of the SMT (9 educators) and is coordinated by a Deputy Principal. The SBST is functional and has identified the learning difficulties and requested support from the ISS unit at the District Office.

The SBST is functional and has identified the learning difficulties and requested support from the ISS unit at the District Office. In accordance with White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001) the SBST also consist of specialists from the community to support learners. A psychologist, speech therapist and social worker are involved. Parents and other members of the community are trained to help with applying of special concessions for learners during all assessment tasks.
b) School P

School P is also situated in the East Rand and caters for learners with Specific Learning Difficulties. The focus of the school is to assist learners with an average to above average cognitive intelligence who experienced barriers to learning in reading, writing, and maths. This school was the first school in the Department of Education that included a hotel course in their curriculum.

The school's success in assisting learners with their learning barriers is based on three factors:

- Specialized support to learners, commitment to quality intervention and education, well-trained, skilful educators and educational support services that works as a dynamic multidisciplinary team.
- Invitational Teaching was implemented. In 2002; the school was awarded the International Invitational Award.
- Excellent Matric results are maintained over the past ten years.

During the past decade, the school had to redefine its purpose within the inclusive scholastic system and the growing need for learner support services. Since 2003, the school has developed into a learning environment which focuses on diversity - diversity in terms of learners’ needs, as well as cultural diversity. The growing individual learning needs of the learners have received primary attention.

In accordance with the Education White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001), the school’s role will change from a specialised school to a specialised school as a resource centre. The role of the school in the broader school community will be extended in as much that the staff's expertise will be available to all schools in the area. The primary mission of the school will still be to provide quality educational intervention for the learners enrolled at the school. The support structure and thus the SBST consist of a multidisciplinary team (speech-and language therapists, occupational therapists and remedial educators). It is coordinated by the Deputy Principal.
4.4.1.2 Description of the participants

The participants comprised:

a) School Management Team - members of the two identified secondary schools (N = 16). School Management Teams usually consists of the Principal, Deputy principal/s, and the two Head of Departments (Senior- and Further Education and Training phases);

b) As this study focused on support strategies across the curriculum, all Grade 8 and 9 educators of the two identified secondary schools were involved (N = 12).

c) School Based Support Team (SBST) members (N=10). A SBST is an internal support team within institutions (schools). The SBST’s in Ekurhuleni North District consists of the following members: the principal as the overall coordinator, two deputy coordinators to represent the functions of the Inclusion and Special Schools unit and the Education Support Systems (ESS) unit and all Grade Heads. The representatives for the ISS unit facilities are two educators who deals with learning difficulties and referrals to ISS, one educator who deals with abuse and crisis intervention, representatives for the ESS unit is one educator for Sports, one for Youth and Culture and one Safety and Values in education. For the purpose of this study only the two educators, as well as the LSE who deal with learning difficulties were involved. The interviews with the SMT members and SBST members were done simultaneously.

d) The participants were personally invited in the form of a letter signed by the researcher’s supervisor, to participate in the research after a meeting with the principals. I explained exactly what the research inclined and concentrated on the process of AI.
4.4.2 Data collection

AI is a holistic approach to thoroughly identifying of good practices and building upon it, therefore a single method of collecting and analysing data are not recommended (Craig, 2009:19). It allows for several different data collection methods to be used as the research is conducted. These various methods, which are generally common to the qualitative research paradigm, include: field notes, document collection and analysis, participant observation, recordings, structured and unstructured interviews, case studies, in short the full range of techniques (Cohen, 2000:237; Cherry, 1998:1). Craig (2009:19) states that it is necessary to make use of multiple sources of data to ensure triangulation.

Data are usually collected through sustained contact with people in the settings where they normally spend their time. Participant observation and in-depth interviewing are the two most common qualitative means to collect data. The researcher enters the world of the people he or she plans to study, gets to know, be known, and trusted by them, and systematically keeps a detailed written record of what is heard and observed. This material is supplemented by other data such as artefacts, school memos and records and photographs (Ferrance, 2000:11).

The variety of data collection methods was used with the aim of strengthening the study by providing triangulation. Triangulation is the cross validation among data sources, data collection strategies, time periods and theoretical schemes (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:379).

The data collection methods used during this study included qualitative data namely: artefacts of learners’ work, focus group interviews, participant observation and field notes made during observations.

The data collection methods indicate that a multi-method approach to data collection were adapted during the research project. In order to find correspondences in the data I compared different sources to see whether if cross-checked by comparing data found in
artefact collections, interviews, questionnaires, field observations and discussions there would be correlation (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:379). Data were collected as follows.

4.4.2.1 Field notes of observations

I made field notes of observations of teaching methods which supported the main idea of good support strategies to enhance CALP. In my field notes I included copies of worksheets, and study material. As I am responsible for the support rendered at these schools it was done as part of my duties and was done once a week over a period of one term. I observed supportive teaching methods in mainly the language classes, but also in classes where the SBST coordinator informed me of good support strategies, such as the Life- and Natural Sciences classes. I used an observation sheet (Appendix 1), which made provision for notes on how the educator supported the learners, how the learners experienced the lesson and exactly what support strategies were used.

4.4.2.2 Focus group interviews

Focus groups are a form of group interview, though not in the sense of a backwards and forwards dialogue between interviewer and group, but rather an interaction within the group who discuss a topic supplied by the researcher (Cohen, 2000:288). A distinguishing feature of a focus group is that the discussion is focused on a particular topic, and that debate and even conflict are encouraged and the group dynamics assist in data generation (Nieuwenhuis, 2007b:90). An important aspect to consider with a focus group is the size. If the group is too small, a disproportionate effect may occur; if too large the group becomes unwieldy and hard to manage (Cohen, 2000:288). McMillan and Schumacher (2006:360) recommend that a focus group should consist of 8 to 12 people.

The focus groups comprised homogeneous participants who were in some way familiar with one another. They were, therefore, selected because they were applying good support strategies to enhance the CALP of Grade 8 and 9 ESL learners (Check and
Schutt, 2012:205; Marshall and Rossman, 2011:149; McMillan and Schumacher, 2010:363). The fact that they all shared a common goal and that AI focuses on good support strategies, with no implication of negative critique helped increase the participants’ comfort in expressing opinions (Ary et al., 2006:482) and allowed for the free flow of ideas. It furthermore reduced the possible feeling of intimidation that might have otherwise led to the suppression of in-depth information needed in this study.

The size of each focus group in a single interview session varied between 6 - 10 participants at each of the two secondary schools. Lewis-Beck, Bryman and Liao (2004:393) endorse that a focus group should consist of between 6 and 12 participants. In deciding the size of a focus group, I was careful that it was not “... as large as to be unwieldy or to preclude adequate participation by most members nor ... so small that it fails to provide substantially greater coverage than that of an interview with one individual”. Focus group interviews were chosen on the assumption that group interaction would always be productive in widening the range of much sought-after responses. Of note, the participants were able to build on each other’s ideas and comments to provide in-depth views and aspects of the topic that would have otherwise not emerged from interviews with individuals (Nieuwenhuis, 2011:90; Babbie, 2004:303). In essence, the interactions among participants enhanced data quality, checks and balances on each other and easy assessment of synergy and/or differences of opinions, beliefs, and feelings about the subject of study among the participants (Greeff, 2003:307). In addition, focus group interviews were economical as they provided opportunities to gather multiple viewpoints and in-depth information about the topic under study in one sitting per session in a relatively short period of time (Heck, 2011:207; Johnson and Christensen, 2008:210). The focus group interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner with the help of an interview guide (cf. Appendix 2). Semi-structured interview technique was suitable because it allowed depth to be achieved by providing the opportunity on the part of the interviewer to probe and increase the participant’s responses. The guides were used to ensure that all relevant issues received attention during the course of the interview meetings (Check and Schutt, 2012:203; Welman, Kruger and Mitchel, 2011:166).
Four focus group interviews were conducted with the SMT and SBST (which included the LSE) as well as with the Grade 8- and 9 -educators respectively at each school. I conducted firstly interviews, with the different groups, to establish “What good support strategies already exist”. Secondly the interviews concentrated on “What might be”, in other words how to improve. The third interviews were to discuss “what the ideal should be” and the last group of interviews was to discuss how all secondary schools can be empowered to implement these good support strategies and therefore bring about sustainable change in the proficiency of the cognitive academic language of ESL. All interviews were recorded and transcriptions were made for data analysis (Merriam, 2006: 6).

4.5 DATA ANALYSIS

Analysing qualitative data is a challenging task but potentially the most important part of the research process as we try to understand what we have learnt through our inquiries. Qualitative data analysis is based on an interpretive philosophy, where the researcher makes sense of or explains the data that has been collected during the research process (Barnes, 2011:47).

Unlike quantitative researchers who wait until the end of the study to analyse their data, qualitative researchers analyse their data throughout their study (Siegle, 1999:1). The qualitative researcher begins data analysis from the initial interaction with participants and continues that interaction and analysis throughout the entire study. Data analysis is a continual process where the researcher tries to identify relationships, similarities or differences from the data (Gay et al., 2009:449). In this research study content analysis was used to make sense of the qualitative data. Content analysis focuses on analysing and interpreting the transcriptions of recorded interviews and research journal (Ary et al, 2006:32). Once data have been collected, the ensuing stage involves analysing it, often by some form of coding or scoring. Data coding begins by identifying small pieces of data that stand alone. According to Gay et al., (2009:449), one way to proceed with analysis is to follow interactive repeating steps or
stages. These include reading, describing what is going on in the setting and classifying the research data. The process focuses on becoming familiar with the data and identifying potential themes, examining the data in depth to provide detailed descriptions of the setting, participants and activities. The process is followed by categorizing and coding pieces of data and grouping them into themes. Through this process the researcher gets a sense of the data, generates initial codes from the data, compares codes for duplication, tries out provisional coding and finally continues to refine the coding system (Cohen, 2000:282). McMillan and Schumacher (2010:371) suggest that most qualitative studies will include thirty to fifty initial codes.

The most important step in the analysis process is to elicit themes or categories from the identified codes. The themes represent major ideas that are used to describe the meaning of similarly coded data. Themes are the first level of induction by the researcher. Similar codes are put together to form the themes, which are then labelled to capture the essence of the codes (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:377).

The following steps were used to elicit themes: reading the data, coding was used to divide the data up into themes, identification, comparison and exploration of themes, labelling of themes and lastly conclusions were made and interpretation followed (Lieblich et al., 1998:112-114). In qualitative data the data analysis method used is interpretive. Therefore, the data analysis is not a completely accurate representation but more of a reflective, reactive interaction between the researcher and the de-contextualised data (Cohen, 2000:282). According to Gabel (1995:5), it is very important that the researcher remains open to new opportunities and insights.

4.6 TRUSTWORTHINESS

The reliability of the data was verified by means of a variety of approaches to ensure the credibility of the study. I aimed at leaving an audit trail as a pathway of decisions that were made in the data analysis process that could be checked by another researcher (Ary et al., 2006:509). In the case of this study, reliability of data was ensured through
sensitivity towards the research data and results. I endeavoured to remain as objective and unbiased as possible (Ary et al., 2006:511; Mertler & Charles, 2005:18). All interactions with the schools focused on the support strategies that were implemented to enhance the acquisition of CALP. I committed myself to ensuring that this study was practical and could benefit the schools and ESL learners in similar public secondary schools.

The reliability or truth value of the research was further achieved through the discovery of human experiences as lived and experienced by the participants. Documentation of the research was kept, including original transcripts of interviews, as well as any relevant documentation, which allows fellow researchers and supervisors to access information and provides assurance of the credibility and reliability of the study. Member checks with the participants were done in order to ensure that what they wished to express on the topic had been understood and recorded correctly (Merriam, 1998:204).

Credibility was established through triangulation, a process of collecting data in as many different ways and from as many diverse sources as possible (Terre Blanche & Kelly, 2002:123; Hendricks, 2006:72). Credibility was also be enhanced through allowing the practitioners in the school to view the research findings and judge them as meaningful and applicable or not, in terms of their experience. A presentation of the overall findings will be given to the research participants; in this study this included all the staff members (SMT, SBST & Grade 8 & 9 educators) and a LSE at each school as well as the DBST at District level. This will ensure that good practices will be implemented across schools in the district.

The credibility of the research was further based on basic principles of validation for qualitative research. These include face validity, content validity and criterion validity that are applied to the interviews with the participants involved (Maree & Petersen, 2007c:217). Sensitivity to context entails the use of the relevant theoretical and empirical literature and consideration of the socio-cultural setting.
4.7 ETHICAL PROCEDURE

Permission was sought from the University of Johannesburg, Gauteng Department of Education, the principal of each school as well as each individual participant of the focus groups. All consent letters are available as appendixes (cf. Appendix 4).

In addition, the participants took part freely in the research process and all ethical procedures were implemented, namely: confidentiality, privacy and informed consent. Commitment to thoroughness was evident through data collection and the depth and breadth of the analysis, the methodological competence and the in-depth engagement of the topic. The effect and importance of the practical theoretical and socio-cultural aspects of the study were considered. Coherence and transparency were evident in the clarity and power of the argument, the fit between theory and method, the transparent methods and data presentation and reflection in the research journal (Mertler & Charles, 2005:18).

4.8 CONCLUSION

As mentioned in chapter two and three educators seems to be overwhelmed by the demands of addressing the learning needs of ESL learners within an inclusion environment. Therefore I have chosen Appreciative Inquiry as research methodology because it shifts the focus from seeing the situation as a problem to be solved, to seeing it as a multidimensional miracle to be appreciated (Cooperrider & Srivasta, 1987:323). It is the cooperative search for the best in people, their organizations and the world around them" It is further based on the assumption that every living system has a hidden and underutilized core of strengths, its positive core, which, when revealed and tapped, provides a sustainable source of positive energy for transformation (Cooperrider, Whitney & Stavros, 2005:3).

The second part of the chapter described the way the research was conducted. Data were collected by conducting focus group interviews with SMT’s, SBST’s and members of the ISS Unit as well as by conducting individual interviews with Grade 8 and 9
educators as well as LSE’s and a speech therapist. Field notes were taken and observations were also done. The data was analysed together with my supervisor and my colleague (psychologist at the District Office).
CHAPTER 5

APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY OUTCOMES AND FINDINGS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the data collection, data analysis and the findings will be described in terms of the appreciative inquiry cycle, the interviews took the format of questions during the discover-, dream-, design- and destiny phases in order to identify good support strategies to enhance the CALP of ESL learners in South Africa. Emerging good support strategies from each phase will be discussed in detail enabling the reader to get a better understanding of the research process and findings.

5.2 DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS IN EACH PHASE OF APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY PROCESS

An overview of the data collection and analysis process in every phase of this AI research study is depicted in Table 5.1 as follows:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PHASE</th>
<th>QUESTIONS</th>
<th>DATA COLLECTION</th>
<th>DATA ANALYSIS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Discovery phase     | a) Describe a time when you were most successful and involved in teaching ESL learners.  
b) What support strategies did you use that contributed to the success of teaching ESL learners? | Focus group interviews (SMT, SBST, Grade 8+9 educators)  
Individual interviews (educators, LSE's, speech therapist)  
Observation, field notes, pictures | Interpreting data  
Identify best support strategies that will enhance CALP  
Interpretation & generation of possible themes |
| Dream phase         | “what might be”  
What might be the ideal support strategies to improve CALP if we take into account the following support strategies that were identified during the first round of this research study? | Focus group interviews with SMT and SBST  
Discussion with psychologist (colleague) at District office and supervisor | Interpreting data  
Identify, compare & explore themes with colleague and supervisor  
Generate improved themes based on data received from the “dreams” of participants. |
| Design phase        | "What will be the best support strategies to empower educators to support ESL learners with regards to CALP? | Focus group interview with ISS unit | Interpretation of data  
Check identified themes  
Generate guidelines on support strategies to enhance CALP of ESL learners in Grade 8 & 9. |
| Destiny phase       |                                                                              | Not done during this research project as the guidelines on good support strategies for enhancing of CALP was only presented to the DBST, but not implemented in all schools to empower educators and bring about sustainable change | |
The previously mentioned phases will be discussed as it occurred in this study.

5.2.1 Phase One: Discovery Phase

The intention of the discovery phase (cf. par. 4.3.3; fig.4.3) of this research project was to enable the participants to reflect on their current support strategies in supporting ESL learners. In this regard Watkins and Kelly (2010:2) says AI “can guide our work with learners based on the realization that what we learn from what works and gives life is more effective and sustainable than what we learn from breakdowns and pathologies.

During the first interviews with the SMT’s, SBST’s and focus groups consisting of Grade 8 and 9 educators it was clear that they are not sure if what they are doing is correct. The SMT’s of both schools felt that they are not supported enough by the DBST. They felt that the subject advisors at the District Office expect the educators to complete the curriculum, whilst the Inclusion Specialist (ISS Unit) expect them to support the learners within an IE environment. As one principal said: “Many educators are not coping with all the demands. The learners are weak. I don't understand how they have reached secondary school.” During the interview with the SBST’s it was also clear that they felt that there is not enough collaboration between them and the DBST. They were of the opinion that it is expected of them to support the educators, to support the learners, but that the expertise is located in the DBST. The interview with the educators was also indicative of negativism. The overall feeling was: “We need support. We are not coping.”

It was necessary for me to ensure them that AI is the cooperative search for the best in people and their organizations. That it is based on the assumption that every living system, in this case, the school; has a hidden and underutilized core of strengths which, when revealed and tapped, provides a sustainable source of positive energy for transformation (Cooperrider, Whitney & Stavros, 2005:3). It was only after this reassurance that they could start talking about what they do, and as I started to identify good practices they could elaborate. One participant said that the AI approach gives them
the opportunity to voice their opinions without resistance and let them think “out of the-box.”

This constructive kind of reflection was necessary in order to enable me as the researcher to develop support strategies built on their good support strategies in order to empower other educators in secondary schools. It was practical in the sense that out of the reflections we could gather data to envision the future as Cooperrider (2005: 27) stated. As mentioned in chapter 4 (cf. par. 4.4.1) the educators in these two schools work closely with the officials in the ISS unit and thus clearly understood the terminology that I used during this study.

The first question asked led me to the realisation that the educators experienced peak experiences (cf. par: 4.3) when they realised that the ESL learners in their classes had succeeded or progressed academically. Success in education is highly dependent on a student’s ability to display knowledge, usually through the spoken or written word (Trunbul & Pacheco, 2005:11). It is consequently important for the educators to use effective support strategies to enhance the learners’ ability to use the English language effectively.

The good support strategies used by the educators to support ESL learners to acquire English CALP effectively are discussed in the ensuing section. These have been discussed per school as each school has different and interesting ways to implement good practice.

### 5.2.2 Emerging good support strategies from the discovery phase (School N)

#### 5.2.2.1 Knowledge of every learner (cf. par.3.6.1)

The members of the SBST and SMT of School N said that they collaborate with the ISS Unit at District level in order to identify learners who need additional support. The coordinator stated that it is expected from the subject teachers, but particularly the English language educator to identify learners who struggle to read and write in English. This is
done by daily observation of the learners work. After the learners has been identified the learners are assessed by the SBST in liaison with the ISS unit at District level do a baseline assessment to determine the reading and spelling age of each learner. The baseline scholastic assessment tool consists of sight word reading, a comprehension passage and spelling. The overall aim of the assessment is not to label learners but to determine the support the learners need. They elaborated and said that this is not done in isolation and that they take into account the learners’ previous reports and assessment results.

During an individual interview with the educator who teaches English to grade 8 learners she presented the following example of the results of such a baseline assessment. She said: “If I know which learners struggle, I can adapt the work I expect from them. It also helps me to pair learners for example during paired reading, where I pair a weak reader with a strong reader”

Table 5.2: Example of Baseline Assessment outcomes for Grade 8 learners who experiences language barriers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Admin no.</th>
<th>Pupil</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Sight Word Reading Age</th>
<th>Spelling age</th>
<th>Comprehension age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14193</td>
<td>NCU</td>
<td>8G</td>
<td>Grade 4</td>
<td>Grade 4</td>
<td>Grade 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14129</td>
<td>FA</td>
<td>8G</td>
<td>Grade 5</td>
<td>Grade 4</td>
<td>Grade 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14377</td>
<td>PH</td>
<td>8G</td>
<td>Grade 5</td>
<td>Grade 5</td>
<td>Grade 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14100</td>
<td>MBA</td>
<td>8G</td>
<td>Grade 5</td>
<td>Grade 5</td>
<td>Grade 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14169</td>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>8G</td>
<td>Grade 5</td>
<td>Grade 5</td>
<td>Grade 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14163</td>
<td>KGOS</td>
<td>8G</td>
<td>Grade 5</td>
<td>Grade 5</td>
<td>Grade 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14369</td>
<td>MAS</td>
<td>8G</td>
<td>Grade 5</td>
<td>Grade 5</td>
<td>Grade 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13259</td>
<td>MASI</td>
<td>8G</td>
<td>Grade 5</td>
<td>Grade 5</td>
<td>Grade 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14273</td>
<td>MO</td>
<td>8G</td>
<td>Grade 5</td>
<td>Grade 4</td>
<td>Grade 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13237</td>
<td>SU</td>
<td>8F</td>
<td>Grade 6</td>
<td>Grade 6</td>
<td>Grade 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14201</td>
<td>CHA</td>
<td>8G</td>
<td>Grade 5</td>
<td>Grade 5</td>
<td>Grade 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.2.2.2 Differentiation (cf.par.3.6.1)

During an interview with SMT it was stated that educators do curriculum differentiation by using different learning materials and learning activities.

The following example comprises a task that was differentiated to suit the needs of the learners. It was shortened and the level of abstract content was reduced and replaced with contextualized content. The objective of the lesson was to explain the use of natural and synthetic material. The educator who presented this example said: “Many of the ESL learners in my class struggles to read and write on a Grade 8 level. Therefore I have to let them experience the content of the lesson on a concrete level first, before it is presented to them in written form. I also have to reduce the amount of reading and written work as well, otherwise they won’t be able to cope”.

I have observed how this educator uses the school building as an example to conceptualize the terms ‘synthetic” and ‘natural” materials. Learners could thus experience this distinction on a concrete level as well.

It must be stated that not all learners did the same amount of theoretical work, as in the following example. Learners who are not struggling academically were given another worksheet to complete.
Figure 5.1: Example of differentiated science worksheet School N
5.2.2.3 Aided language stimulation and vocabulary enhancement by using technology, models etc. / Hands-on activities (cf. par. 3.6.1; 3.6.2)

The school makes use of computers/tablets from where the text is read to the learners as well as videos and computerized educational games to make learning of English fun.

The following photo shows a learner who attends remedial lessons with the LSE after school. He is using a Compact Disk (CD) that is inserted into the laptop and a workbook. The text is read by a voice artist on the CD and the text is presented in print by the educator. The learner can thus hear and read the story (text).

Figure 5.2: Photo of learner using a laptop as well as printed script

I further observed a lesson on transportation where the educator made use of a ‘hands-on’ activity. The educator made use of labelled pictures, reading aloud, and interestingly, one learner brought a bicycle to school and another learner’s father brought a motorcycle for the learners to experience how it works. The lesson was integrated with technology and the learners were interested and focused.

Herrel (2000: 34) refers to this strategy as ‘realia’. Realia is a term for any real, concrete object used in the classroom to create connections with vocabulary words, stimulate
conversation, and build background knowledge. Realia gives students the opportunity to use all of their senses to learn about a given subject, and is appropriate for any Grade or skill level. Educators can defray costs by collaborating on a school wide collection of realia that all can use. When the real object is not available or is impractical, educators can use models or semi-concrete objects, such as photographs, illustrations and artwork. The use of realia can also be an ideal way to incorporate cultural content into a lesson. For example, eating utensils, clothing and music from different cultures can build vocabulary and increase comprehension while also providing insight into different cultures.

By making use of ‘realia’ (real objects) different language skills can be taught and I include the following illustrations as good practices:

In the following illustration spelling as well as grammar was taught:

![Image]

Figure 5.3: Illustration from Oxford Successful English Grade 6 English Learner’s Book: First Additional Language (Ben, Lloyd & Taitz, 2012: 43).
Spelling was taught by using the way words sounds when we say it and then the correct spelling was emphasized:

Example:
We say ‘weel’ but remember we spell it ‘wheel’.

The use of negative concord was explained and the grammatical rule was emphasized as follows:
“The concord rule says that if the subject of the sentence is singular the verb must also be singular.”

Example:
She rides a bicycle.
They ride a bicycle.

“The same rule applies to negative concord”:

Example:
She does not ride a bicycle.
They do not ride a bicycle.

Learners then had to complete worksheets like this:

We does/do not have any bicycles, but we love to ride. She does/do not let us use her bicycle. So we does/do not have a plan for what to do. I does/do not know what to do.

Source: Ben et.al. (2012:42-43).
Vocabulary as well as pronunciation was also taught:

Example:
Friction (say frik-shunn)
- The action of one object or surface rubbing against another: *Oil in the engine reduces friction between the moving parts.*
- Disagreement between people: *There is a lot of friction between the children in this home* (Ben, et.al. 2012:42).

Figure 5.4: Illustration from Oxford Successful English Grade 6 English Learner’s Book: First Additional Language (Ben et.al. 2012:42).
The following pictures and texts were used to practice reading for information. The learners were paired and asked to look at the pictures, before reading, and talk to each about the parts of each vehicle.

The following instruction was that whilst they are reading the paragraph, they have to specifically notice the different parts and try to remember them.
5.2.2.4 Scaffolding (cf. par 3.6.1)

The Grade 8 English educator remarked: “We do a lot of scaffolding. I believe; if a learner has managed to use the sentence; I will play soccer this afternoon, then he/she can make the same sentence with another noun as well, for example “I will play rugby this afternoon” etc. She further remarked that teaching spelling by repetition also worked for the learners. When educators want to build comprehension of unfamiliar words they add a picture (to explain the word) to the sentence or paragraph and they let the learner/s sound the words (decoding) before they expect the learner to read and comprehend.
5.2.2.5 Integrating language lessons into other curriculum areas (cf. par 3.6.3)

The English Grade 8 educator said “If all educators can work together on the acquiring of English as an academic language, it can be to everyone’s benefit. Learning will become more meaningful and situated and ESL learners will learn the language and not about the language. If, for example a language lesson’s theme is “My School”, the educators plan together as follows”:

![Integrated Lesson Plan: School N](image)

Figure 5.6: Integrated Lesson Plan: School N
The educators also integrate language into other learning areas by providing vocabulary/word lists in order to help ESL learners to access the subject content they are studying. The following is a good example.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word List: Listening for Attitude or viewpoint</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Guest speaker: Somebody from another organization/ outside, who come and deliver a speech at the school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fact: Something you know is true</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opinion: What you think about something: it may not be true</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viewpoint: The opinion that the person has on a specific issue</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5.7: Example of Word List: School N

5.2.2.6 Code-switching (cf. par. 3.6.1)

The deputy principal elaborated on the fact that code-switching is effective, if black educators are willing to explain new concepts to learners in the L1. They will, in other words, co-teach with educators who cannot speak the L1 of the learners. He explained, “In this way we can ensure that learners’ home language is supported as well as that they really understand a new concept being taught.

The grade 9 English language educator added: “It also work when the learners converse with their friends in their home-language during discussions.”

Thomas and Collier (2002) endorse this good practice when they state that whenever possible, ELL students should be provided with academic support in their native
language. According to Lucas and Katz (1994:545), a student’s native language serves several important functions: it gives students “access to academic content, to classroom activities, and to their own knowledge and experience”. In addition, they found that it also “gave educators a way to show their respect and value for students’ languages and cultures; acted as a medium for social interaction and establishment of rapport; fostered family involvement, and fostered students’ development of, knowledge of, and pride in their native languages and cultures”. Educators can use texts that involve a student’s native culture, can decorate the classroom with posters and objects that reflect the students’ diversity of language and culture, can organize entire lessons around cultural content, and can encourage students to use words from their native language when they cannot find the appropriate word in English (Freeman & Freeman, 2001). This strategy is of great importance as Lemmer (2002) states, “Educational environments should be created that allow children to develop and maintain both their first and second languages in the most effective and beneficial ways possible”.

5.2.2.7 Re-teaching of basic language skills (cf. par. 3.6.3)

During the focus group interview with the Grade 8 and 9 educators they remarked that they sometimes have to re-teach reading, spelling and grammar. It seemed to work for many learners. However, this created a challenge regarding teaching time and the fact that Grade 8 and 9 learners do not want to be taught ‘primary school’ work.

5.2.2.8 Teaching of reading (cf. par. 3.6.3)

Reading is the centre of our universe; it ensure access to knowledge and world incidents by means of reading books, magazines and newspapers, watching TV and surfing the internet. It keeps humans in touch with each other and promotes personal development (cf. par. 3.6.3). Due to the importance of reading and the value thereof for every individual, the educators in School N focused on the improvement of learners’ reading skills.
The educators initially start with phonic books and then move on to reading passages and comprehensions. The comprehension questions were placed in the same sequence as the sentences where the learners would find the answers. Example: The answer to Question 1 will be found in the first sentence of the passage.

Another important statement that was made by the Head of Department of the senior Phase was: “We set comprehensions on a wide range of topics in order to introduce or reinforce concepts in other learning areas.”

They further make use of the Dolch Sight Words (GDE, 2014: 58). These are the 220 words that appear most frequently in books. Most of the words have no easy explanation and should therefore be learned by rote. Flashcards are used to teach the words and frequent spelling tests are written in order to assess how well the learners recognize the words.

5.2.2.9 Reading aloud (c.f. par. 3.6.3)

During all observation sessions I found that when the educators read aloud to the learners, the learners seemed more focused and concentrated better (cf. par. 3.6.3). It was clear to me that the learners understood the written text better when the educator combined the reading with facial expression and different tone of voice. One learner remarked: “If she changes her face to being cross or her voice to being sad, I can understand the emotions behind the words better.”

5.2.2.10 Paired reading (cf. par.3.6.3)

During observation I noted that paired reading can be effective. A stronger learner was paired with a weaker one to support the slow or weak reader. The discussions afterwards were vigorous, which gave the learners another opportunity to practise their use of English. The educators remarked that it helps the weaker reader to become more fluent.
5.2.2.11 Explicit teaching of grammar (cf. par. 3.6.4)

The overall feeling of the educators was: “Grammar seems to be very challenging to learners in Grade 8 who is struggling academically. The learners have particular difficulties with use of the correct tenses, agreement of the pronoun and verb for example: “he plays with the ball; we play with the ball. The use of personal pronouns seems to be a severe problem for black learners in general.” The educators said some learners had to be taught individually or in small groups.

The English language educator said: “Sentence construction should be taught through creating opportunities for ESL learners to listen to L1 language speakers and by letting them practise speaking English to their friends.”

5.2.2.12 Cooperative learning/Peer support (cf.par.3.6.1)

At School N, educators group learners together in heterogeneous groups. According to them it encourages the higher achieving group members to assist learners who are having academic difficulties to understand and perform better. Learners become actively involved and their efforts contribute to the goal set by the group. As part of the group, learners acquire social skills to work with and support those who may at first be perceived as different.

5.2.2.13 Peer-coaching (cf.par.3.6.1)

All research members felt that the support of the LSE is exceptional. It contributed in the way of peer-coaching. A coach is someone who is seen as an expert in a specific field, in this case education of ESL learners (cf. par. 3.6.1). The class educators stated that they were not trained to support learners with severe literacy difficulties and therefore the LSE and the educators work cooperatively to identify the best support strategies to support learners. One educator remarked: “She helps me a lot. I don’t have the knowledge that she has.”
5.2.2.14 Continuous and differentiated assessment tasks

Learners coped better with assessment tasks that required short answers; the educators said that they assessed only key concepts (cf. par. 3.6.2).

The following example of a question shows how multiple choice questions are asked:

Choose the correct verb to match the subject of each sentence:

  a) He has/have not been for a ride.
  b) They has/have not been for a ride.
  c) She is/are not going in the taxi.

Most educators felt that learners should rather be assessed on the Grade level than on the level where they function. One member mentioned that there are learners who are not able to cope with Grade 8/9 work and who would benefit from placement in a special school. She also said, “When we had extra lessons just on acquiring the language skills, it worked, but in order to do that, we need extra time to complete the curriculum.” Another educator added: “We are according to the subject facilitators at District level, not allowed to assess learners on different Grade levels.”

5.2.2.15 Assessment concessions

Assessment concessions such as extra time to read and re-read work as well as amanuensis (reader and scribe) or only reading to a candidate seem to be an excellent support strategy. The educators stated that if the struggling readers knew that they have enough time to re-read their work, they were more at ease and could think more clearly (cf. par. 3.6.3).
5.2.3 Emerging good support strategies from the discovery phase (School P)

5.2.3.1 Scaffolding (cf.par.3.6.1)

Scaffolding at School P consists of several linked support strategies such as: modelling academic language; contextualizing academic language using visuals, gestures, and demonstrations; as well as using hands-on learning activities that involve academic language.

The educators said that they know it is important to model tasks first and then support learners as they attempt these tasks. They further said that it is important to set up tasks which challenge learners to perform beyond their current ability and then provide additional support in order to make it possible for the learners to perform at the new level.

5.2.3.2 Extensive knowledge of every learner

At School P the SBST consists of a multi-disciplinary team, which includes speech- and occupational therapists as well as councillors and remedial educators. These therapists work according to the principal with the educators and not according to the old medical model. Educators and parents attend workshops on the importance of finding every learner’s strong competencies. Through thorough observation and assessment of learners’ strong competencies their learning style (according to multiple intelligences theory) is found (cf. par. 3.6.1). This is built into the lessons that are conducted by the educators. Research members remarked, “All learners are different, they learn different and we have to adapt our learning materials and styles accordingly”.

5.2.3.3 Cooperative learning/Peer support (cf.par.3.6.1)

It was clear during every observation session that the educators group the learners according to mixed abilities. The educators render support, whilst the learners are
working together. The Grade 9 English educator said “This is one strategy that I feel, let learners feel included and supported.”

During the same observation session (Grade 9 English) a learner remarked to me, “You must write down that I cannot read as well as my friend and therefore I need him to help me to cope”. As the learners receive support from the whole school environment, they accept their limitations and understand that they need support.

5.2.3.4 Differentiation (cf.par.3.6.1)

The observation was made that educators at School P cater for all learning styles according to the multiple intelligences theory (Barnard, Chamberlain, Ditloiso & Murtough, 2005:6) This implies that they differentiate to accommodate different abilities and learning styles (cf. par. 3.6.1). For example they give each group member a different task according to his or her strengths; create different types of tasks related to same learning material, make use of role-play, dramatizing, singing, dancing, drawing, creating mind maps, have group- and class discussions, present pictures and sketches, visual models, videos, structured passages or guided writing in order to support the way learners learn and give feedback on what they have learned.

The following is an example of how a speech is planned with the learners to ensure successful delivery.
Figure 5.8: Example of worksheet prepared by an educator (School P) on planning a speech.

In the class the educator works with the learners showing them how to highlight key concepts in order to fulfil the requirements. This method is also used to make summaries and finally, to create mind-maps of study material.
This is an example of a mind-map that was done by a learner on “Clothing for every season.”

Figure 5.9 Example of a mind-map

The following artefact indicates how educators use of clarifying questions to help the learners to think clearly and grasp information. It helps with planning and presenting feedback in a logical way.
4.1.6 Speech

When you write a speech, think about the following before you start and adapt accordingly:

HOW: What style to use (serious, humorous, etc.)? Will you please, encourage, etc.? Will you be aggressive, gentle, truthful, diplomatic?

WHEN: When are you speaking? The main speaker? After dinner, interval, in the morning, afternoon, evening?

WHERE: At a christening, wedding, business lunch, school function. In a yacht, hall, lounge? Around a table?

WHY: What is the purpose of the occasion? Why have YOU been invited to speak?

WHO: Who will be there? How many? Young/older audience/families/businesses/women?

WHAT:

• Show conviction, enthusiasm, and self-confidence in the planning stage and it will show in your presentation.
• A strong (clever) opener will attract attention.
• Develop your points well and avoid clichés.
• Decide where you should pause and where to use gestures (naturally) and for what purpose. (Keep eye-contact.)
• Use contrasting tones (and points) but remain audible.
• Use fairly short sentences with simple ideas, using familiar examples.
• Balance criticisms with reasonable alternatives.
• Consider the closing. Leave the audience with a thought (or two).
• Visual or physical aids may be used, but your words must come first.
• You may use notes, but only for reference.
• Avoid irritating mannerisms.
• Avoid vulgar expressions your maturity, values and background. Swearing, crudity...

Figure 5.10 Example of worksheet where clarifying questions are asked.
The educators at School P make use of different ways to present lessons to the learners, in order to accommodate all learners learning styles.

This photograph shows a lesson presented in the form of a video.

Figure 5.11: Video - lesson presentation: School P
The following illustrations indicate educators’ use of different texts/genres to stimulate learning.

Figure 5:12: Examples of different genres to stimulate learning.

5.2.3.5 Integrating language lessons into other curriculum areas (cf.par. 3.6.3)

According to the SBST coordinator and language educators, it is very important to incorporate language learning into content areas of the curriculum. The Grade 8 language educator said the following: “Reading is part of every lesson. Educators of ESL learners have to guide learners through the texts that they read. They have to focus on the headings, subheadings, pictures, punctuation and tenses. According to her, ESL learners are so stressed about their comprehension that they read word-by-word and at the end make little sense of what they are reading. It is important that educators and learners talk about the topic before they start reading or working in order to establish the learners’
background knowledge. They must make use of pictures and other materials to place new knowledge in context. This way vocabulary is learnt and maintained. Grammar must be taught in every lesson. Educators should frequently focus on comparative forms of adjectives, such as “greater than” or “fewer than” that occur in mathematics or science. During a science experiment the educator may stress that the passive voice is usually used to describe processes, such as “the water was warmed before……”

Although the educators attempt to maintain this strategy, more should be done in order to improve. The content subject educators said that they need more support from the language educators in this regard as they are not language specialists. They said, for example, that they do not teach grammar and spelling as it does not count in subjects other than English and Afrikaans.

5.2.3.6 Multicultural picture books (cf. par. 3.6.3)

At School P the educators strive to use learning material that are on the level of interest of the learners and do not discriminate. One educator remarked: “I make use of the work of famous black people, such as, a poem by Sol Plaatjies, or sayings by Nelson Mandela, in order to help black ESL learners to realize that English is culturally friendly.

5.2.3.7 Creating classroom libraries and making use of dictionaries

Reading with comprehension is of utmost importance in order to reach academic success (cf. par. 3.6.3.). In School P educators make use of the internet and magazines from different cultures in order to create a stimulating and culturally-accepting atmosphere. As ESL learners struggle with technical terms and lack vocabulary, the educators make use of dictionaries with pictures and let learners create their own little dictionaries to refer to when needed. In this regard, I noted an Isizulu-Afrikaans-English dictionary used by a learner.
The following example were photographed whilst doing observation at the school:

5.2.3.8 Reading aloud (cf. par. 3.6.3)

In every class where I did observation, the educator read aloud to the learners. Educators and learners asked clarifying questions, talked about the pictures and predicted the outcome of a story. By doing this the educators demonstrated effective reading strategies, such as focusing on specific aspects of the text like: visual material and vocabulary.
5.2.3.9 Paired reading or repeated reading (cf. par. 3.6.3)

As an educator stated: "This strategy brings about better understanding." It was done on a regular basis, but the educators never left the learners to do it on their own. They were also involved in every reading activity as reading is a difficulty for most of the learners.

5.2.3.10 Presenting of oral feedback and asking clarifying questions in order to improve comprehension

One educator remarked: "We focus on comprehension of the text that was read". This method also helps with enhancing of comprehension," another research member remarked.

During observation I found that educators ask clarifying questions and focus on teaching vocabulary in order to make the work comprehensible for the learners. Feedback is not only given in the form of marked assignments, but also orally while the learners are busy in the class.

Please note the colours used in the following worksheet to support the learners to ask clarifying questions whilst reading for understanding. The educator who did these worksheets said: “By emphasizing specific technical vocabulary ESL learners learn to respond correctly to specific questions asked during an examination.”
5.2.3.11 Language educators teach spelling explicitly (cf. par. 3.6.4)

The learners are taught spelling by writing the word in syllables and colouring each syllable in different colours. One educator remarked, “Learners’ books should not look like a battlefield.” They do not use red pens to correct spelling or grammar and only do corrections purposefully. The remedial educators and speech therapists support the educators in this regard.
5.2.3.12 Provide wordlists/ vocabulary lists (cf. par. 3.6.4)

According to a research member, the terminology of specific subjects is taught before new work is introduced. They also make use of concrete objects, experiments and visual aids as ESL learners lack the academic language proficiency to carry out higher cognitive operations, like generalising and arguing through the medium of English.

5.2.3.13 Guided writing (cf. par. 3.6.4)

The educators guide learners on how to write essays, letters and other pieces of writing. They give learners examples of a letter; plan together, do drafts and finally the learners write independently.

The following is examples of guided writing worksheets:

Figure 5. 15: Examples of worksheets by educators with regard to guided writing.
5.2.3.14 Aided language stimulation and vocabulary enhancement by using technology, models etc. / Hands-on activities (cf. par. 3.6.1; 3.6.2)

This picture shows a learner making use of a reading machine. A card with words or a sentence is placed in the machine and the machine reads it to the learner, the words is shown on the machine as the learner reads together with the recorded voice.

Figure 5.16: Learner using a reading machine

A research member remarked that technology or “gadgets” as he termed them, should be used with extra care because “although it is interesting and stimulates learning it can be disturbing as it may cause the learners to concentrate more on the device itself and not on the concept being taught.”
The following picture shows how a visualizer is used. The visualizer can be turned to show a picture on the screen that is at the back of the class. It is very useful as the learners then do not have to turn their heads and be distracted.

Figure 5.17: Lesson Presentation School P

It can also zoom in on reading material and show only words and even letters as seen in the following picture.

Figure 5.18: Lesson Presentation School P
5.2.3.15 Making use of assistive devices (cf. par. 3.6.1)

To record learning material aurally, a recorder is used and the learning material is then copied to the learner’s cellular phones to use for studying and doing homework. During an interview with the language educator, she mentioned, “ESL learners also pronounce words differently, which may cause a breakdown in understanding terms correctly. In order to address this, the use of assistive devices such as “READ-TEXT HELP” can be very helpful as it can record the educator reading the text or the text can be read by a computer voice in slower pace or even word-by-word. This also helps to improve with the listening skills of the learners.”

5.2.3.16 Continuous and differentiated assessment tasks (cf. par. 3.6.2)

The educators stressed that they use continuous assessment as it involves a series of tasks that are individually assessed. Learners are assessed on the key concepts only and in a variety of ways. Educators made use of different types of assessments like multi-choice answers and oral as well as written assessment tasks which require short answers. A language educator remarked that they also make use of assessment tasks that allow for scaffolding: “During a comprehension test the key words in the text as well as in the questions are marked in colour and the questions follows chronologically from the first paragraph to the last”.

5.2.3.17 Assessment concessions (cf. par. 3.6.2)

School P implements this strategy in order to support ESL learners who experience reading difficulties, in particular. Extra time is assigned to learners who are identified with reading difficulties. An educator mentioned: “ESL learners read slowly and misinterpret words and therefore need time to re-read and make meaning of the questions asked. They also need extra time to do self-corrections of their output during tests and examinations.”
5.2.3.18 Parental involvement (par.3.6.1)

“Parents must be involved; Derick Jackson (educational psychologist) once said to parents: The more you support your child’s educators the more he/she will perform academically,” a member of the SBST remarked.
According to the principal, parental involvement is not as good as they want it to be, but they invite the parents on a monthly basis to discuss the progress of the learners. The SBST also does quarterly workshops with the parents on different aspects concerning aspects that may affect the progress of the learners. Parents are empowered to support their children more effectively.

5.2.3.19 Homework (par.3.6.1)

The Homework Policy of School P states that:

- Homework should be assigned purposefully. Appropriate purposes for homework include practising a skill or process that students can do independently but not fluently and elaborating on information that has been addressed in class to deepen learners' knowledge.
- Homework should be planned in such a way that learners will be able to complete it independently. For example, ensure that homework is at the appropriate level of difficulty

A research member stated that homework should be “meaningful and achievable”. The principal stated clearly, “If a learner experience failure every time he opens a book, he will stop doing it”. He further said he wished he could avoid homework as it causes stress to everyone, but knows that it is necessary to develop self-discipline in every learner (cf. par. 3.6.1). They also felt that learners should not be given homework over weekends and holidays.
5.2.4. Discussion and interpretation of the findings during the Discovery Phase

According to White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001) educational systems should be designed and educational programmes implemented in such a way that it takes into account the wide diversity of learners’ needs. The SIAS document stated that it is the responsibility of the educators to drive the support process (DBE, 2014:29). Therefore it is needed that educators not only review existing support strategies, but embrace possible new ones.

The findings of the discovery phase indicates that the educators in the two identified schools address the insufficient academic language proficiency of ESL learners by using curriculum differentiation. Curriculum differentiation can be done at the level of content, teaching methodologies, assessment and learning environment (DBE, 2011:5).

The findings firstly indicate that they differentiate the curriculum content by reducing the abstractness and complexity of the tasks. Secondly it indicates that they differentiate their teaching methods by providing a variety of learning materials and activities such multi-cultural books, art, role-play, guided writing etc. It also shows that their way of presenting lessons differs. They make use of pictures, cartoons, diagrams etc. to make learning accessible for the ESL learners. Scaffolding is very important to all the educators and refers to the personal guidance, assistance, and support that an educator or peer provides to a learner (DBE: 2011:9).

According to the findings, especially in School P, they organise their lessons or learning activities according to the multiple intelligences concept of Gardener (1983).

After this discussion and interpretation of the findings with my supervisor and colleague (educational psychologist) at the district office the following themes were elicited and can be presented as follows:
a) Theme 1: General school- and classroom support strategies

- Effective Integrating language lessons into other curriculum areas
- Creative teaching methods
- Success experiences
- Differentiating the content of lessons
- Role-play
- Art
- Dramatizing
- Extensive knowledge of every learner
- Effective homework assignments
- Parental involvement
- Code-switching and peer-coaching
- Record learning material
- Scaffolding
- Aided language stimulation and vocabulary enhancement by using technology, models etc. / Hands-on activities

b) Theme 2: Support strategies to strengthen reading, reading comprehension and writing.

- Classroom libraries
- Multicultural picture books
- Making use of dictionaries
- Provide wordlists/ vocabulary lists
- Summarizing
- Reading aloud
- Paired reading or repeated reading
- Presenting of oral feedback, asking clarifying questions and providing extra time for learners to read and re-read information
- Support spelling
- Guided writing
c) Theme 3: Differentiated assessment strategies

- Continuous and differentiated assessment tasks.
- Assessment concessions

5.2.5 Phase Two: Dream Phase

In the dream phase, the attention was directed at the vision that the participants have for supporting and enhancing of CALP of ESL learners in secondary schools (cf. par. 4.3.3; Fig. 4.3). The overarching question to be answered was “What might be the ideal support strategies to support ESL learners.” The phase commenced by considering how the existing good support strategies that were identified have influenced their dream and vision for the future, that is, how the past has dictated the direction of the future. According to Cooperrider et al (2005:39), the dream phase is both practical and generative. It is practical in the sense that it is grounded in the history of good support strategies that already exist and it is generative in that it seeks to expand the vision that the participants have for enhancing CALP and support ESL learners.

The themes were discussed with both schools. It was stressed that we have to consider what might be the ideal way to support ESL learners in all secondary schools and not necessarily only in their own schools.

5.2.5.1 Findings of the Dream Phase

The following outcomes were stressed during the focus group interviews with the SMT’s and SBST’s:
The SBST’s of both schools agreed that these are good strategies to be used when teaching ESL learners, but that effective collaboration between the DBST and SBST’s of schools are necessary in order to support and empower educators to implement it.

They agreed that Individual Educational Programmes (IEP’s) should be developed according to the strengths and needs of every learner. An IEP’s refer to an educator’s record of the results of the diagnostic assessment of a learner and includes medium-term learning targets and related support strategies set for learners requiring additional learning support (Lalvani, 2013; 17). An IEP guides the implementation of learning support services inside or outside the classroom to align the educational program with the needs of the learner (Smith, 2013:4).

They also felt that educators need training in the field of applying the multiple intelligence model and multi-level teaching (cf. par. 3.6.1).

A SBST member for School N suggested that ‘group work’ or ‘cooperative learning’ (cf.par.3.6.1) should be implemented in such a way that ESL learners discuss tasks verbally. “In that way they will be encouraged to use English and be able to correct each other”.

“We must ensure success experiences (cf. par.3.6.1) for the learners. Learners who struggle academically have a low self-image and need to be successful to be motivated. When learners don’t cope, they tend to have more behavioural problems, lower achievement, and a greater risk of dropping out of school”, another member remarked.

One member remarked that peer tutoring could be expanded to “cross-age tutors”, which indicates that learners from upper Grades within the school can be asked to support Grade 8 and 9 learners. Cross- age tutors refer to the concept where younger learners can be paired with advanced literacy-level learners in higher grades (Miller, et.al. 2013:425).
The closing remark by the principal of School P was: “If educators can experience this study, they will believe that inclusive education and supporting ESL learners is a reality. They would believe that they can do it, because if these support strategies exist in our schools it exists in their schools as well. It must just be explored and applied.” A striking proposal emanated from this statement: ISS officials should become mentors for educators and learners in need of inspiration and advice.

5.2.5.2 Discussion of the findings of the Dream Phase

During this phase it was evident that the SMT- and SBST members of both schools appreciated the way in which the research were conducted. They stressed the fact that there has to be positive collaboration between the DBST, SBST and educators of all schools in order to support educators. They stressed the fact that educators need support and possibly training with regard to the multiple intelligence model as well as multi-level teaching.

5.2.6 Phase Three: Design Phase

The “design phase” draws on the context of what has been discovered and what has been dreamt about (cf. par.4.3.3; fig.4.3). There is also the possibility of building on the foundation that has previously been created. This phase enables the participants to discuss what could potentially be built on that which has worked in the past. This phase, according to Cooperrider et al (2005:40), involves the collective construction of the future of service learning and community engagement in terms of “provocative propositions based on a chosen social architecture”.

The most important aim of this study was to supply the SBST’s, DBST and the ISS Unit with guidelines on good support strategies that can be used to enhance the CALP of ESL learners who are already in Grade 8 and 9 and still struggles to achieve the set academic outcomes. Therefore, during this phase all data were discussed with ISS members and the support strategies were produced in the form of guidelines.
The guidelines on good support strategies is contained in Appendix 5. The reader is referred to these guidelines for full detail of the recommended good support strategies. It covers the following components:

- **General school- and classroom support strategies**
  
  - Extensive knowledge of every learner
  - Success experiences
  - Creative teaching methods
  - Differentiation
  - Scaffolding
  - Effective integrating language lessons into other curriculum areas
  - Co-teaching and code-switching/interpretation
  - Cooperative learning
  - Aided language stimulation and vocabulary enhancement by using technology, models etc. / Hands-on activities
  - Multi-level Teaching
  - Parental involvement
  - Effective homework assignments

- **Support strategies to strengthen reading, reading comprehension and writing.**
  
  - Re-teaching of basic literacy skills
  - Teaching Reading
    - Reading aloud
    - Paired reading
    - Reading material
    - Reading comprehension
- Teaching spelling and grammar
- Guided writing

- Assessment strategies
  - Continuous and differentiated assessment tasks
  - Assessment concessions

5.3 CONCLUSION

The findings of this study indicates that the educators in the two selected schools are addressing the inadequate CALP of ESL learners by using a variety of learning materials and teaching/support strategies to ensure that the learners experience success in the classroom. The collaboration between the DBST, SBST, educators and parents seems to be essential in order to find the best support strategies to enhance CALP. Guidelines to accelerate CALP has been developed and is available in Appendix 5.
CHAPTER 6

FINAL CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND AREAS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

6.1 INTRODUCTION

My study was designed to appreciate good support strategies which could enhance the acquisition of CALP for Grades 8 and 9 ESL learners. Through this study guidelines on good support strategies were developed for educators, the ISS unit and the DBST to enhance the CALP of ESL learners.

I organize this chapter by first restating the purpose of the study followed by the research questions, a summary of the literature review, research design and the findings. I then present the implications of the study, the recommendations for future research as well as the significance of the study and final conclusions.

6.2 THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of my study was to determine and define the good support strategies used by the Grade 8 and 9 educators in two good performing, ex-Model C secondary schools in Ekurhuleni North District, that have resulted in positive outcomes and to generate guidelines on support strategies based on my findings, for educators to enhance CALP for Grade 8 and 9 learners.

6.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study answered the following research questions:

- What good support strategies are implemented in two identified ex-model C secondary schools in the Ekurhuleni North District that can enhance the acquisition of CALP for ESL learners in Grade 8 and 9?
What guidelines on support strategies can be developed for educators and the DBST to enhance the CALP of ESL learners?

6.4 SUMMARY OF THE LITERATURE REVIEW

My study has been grounded on the key principles of inclusive education as a way to create a system that is about belonging, nurturing and educating all students, regardless of their differences in ability, culture, gender, language, class and ethnicity (Engelbrecht, et.al. 2015:1).

Barriers to learning refers to difficulties that arise within the education system as a whole, the learning site and/or within the learner him/herself which prevent both the system and the learner needs from being met (DBE, 2014:7).

The inadequate cognitive academic language proficiency of second language learners is seen as a key barrier to learning in South Africa. According to the Annual National Assessment that was done in 2014, the national average performance for literacy (Home language) Grade 9 stands at 48 % and for first additional language 34% (ANA Results Grade 1 to 6 & 9. DBE, 2014).

In order to address the fact that alarmingly few learners in South African schools can read and write competently, exemplary language policies have been formulated to protect linguistic diversity and promote language equity and develop the historically marginalised African languages (Heugh 2013, 1). The LiEP stresses non-discriminatory language use and the internationally accepted principle of mother tongue education in the context of a bilingual or multilingual framework (DNE, 1997). The National Curriculum Statement (NCS) for Languages (DNE, 2002:4) states that learners should become competent in their additional language while their home language is maintained and developed.

Additional to the above policies, the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) states that a maximum of eight hours and a minimum of seven hours are
allocated for home Language and a minimum of two hours and a maximum of three hours for Additional Language in Grades 1 and 2. In Grade 3 a maximum of eight hours and a minimum of seven hours are allocated for home Language and a minimum of three hours and a maximum of four hours for First Additional Language (DNE, 2011:5). Despite this policies and the results of the ANA, only the minority of South African learners are educated in their L1 and parents still believe that English is the best choice of LoLT for their children and they enrol them into ex-model C schools from Grade 1 (Heugh, 2011:128; Nel & Theron, 2008: 1). Their L1 is thus not maintained and it may lead to learning difficulties (Nel & Theron, 2008:1).

According to Cummins’s work since 1979, ESL learners can quickly acquire considerable fluency in the dominant language in society when they are exposed to it. However, despite this rapid growth in conversational fluency, it generally takes a minimum of about five years for them to catch up to L1 learners in academic aspects of the language. This refers to his distinction between surface knowledge and deeper conceptual-linguistic knowledge. Surface knowledge draw attention to the skills required for ordinary relaxed conversation, not cognitively demanding, and enables one to communicate in everyday situations. He refers to this as BICS. Deeper conceptual-linguistic knowledge refers to skills that are needed when reading and/or writing an advanced text which he calls the CALP.

As the main argument of this study was that CALP is necessary for academic success, I have focused on the identification of good support strategies to support ESL learners to achieve their full potential within an inclusive environment (Cummins, 2000; DBE, 2014:9).
6.5 SUMMARY OF THE METHODOLOGY

I chose to use AI Inquiry as research methodology as it may help educators to recognize their strengths, achievements and optimal experiences and then build on it to create positive change (Cooperrider et.al. 2003:106).

Appreciative Inquiry” is a research method that allows the researcher, in collaboration with the research members (in this case the educators), to discover the elements and factors in an organization (schools) that enabled it to achieve success in the past, and then builds upon those elements and factors to help the organization create a positive future (Troxel, 2002: 3; Shuayb et.al., 2009:3).

AI views language and words as the basic building blocks of social reality. The most crucial aspect of AI is the interview. Questions are asked that strengthen the system’s capacity to identify, anticipate and heighten positive potential. AI interviewing is different from traditional interviews because rather than asking facts and opinions, AI interviews seek examples, stories and metaphors (Bushe & Kassam, 2005: 176). The purpose is to find the best moments, events and stories.

Troxel (2002:4) stated: “Our questions determine the results we achieve.” Therefore I have used affirmative language and questions to motivate the research participants to explore better teaching strategies to accelerate the acquisition of CALP for ESL learners in Grade 8 and 9.

In the case of this study, reliability of data was ensured through sensitivity towards the research data and results. I strived to stay objective and unbiased (Mertler & Charles, 2005:18). All interactions with the educators focused on the support strategies that were implemented to enhance the acquisition of CALP.

All documentation of the research was kept, including original transcripts of interviews, as well as any relevant documentation, which allows fellow researchers and supervisors to access information and provides assurance of the credibility and reliability of the study.
Member checks with the participants were done in order to ensure that what they wished to express on the topic had been understood and recorded correctly (Merriam, 1998:204). Credibility was established through triangulation, a process of collecting data in as many different ways and from as many diverse sources as possible (Terre Blanche & Kelly, 2002:123; Hendricks, 2006:72). I used individual interviews, focus group interviews, photos, and artefacts to ensure triangulation. Credibility was further enhanced through allowing the educators in the schools to view the research findings and judge them as meaningful and applicable or not, in terms of their experience.

6.6 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

I have used AI as research methodology to identify good practices used by educators in two selected schools. These good practices were then used to develop guidelines to enhance the acquisition of CALP for ESL learners, based on differentiating the curriculum content, creative ways of teaching, multilevel teaching, scaffolding, differentiated learning and alternative assessment methods, as described by Bormann and Rose (2010: 242, DBE, 2011:4-12) for educators, the ISS unit and the DBST.

Firstly I focused on the general school- and classroom strategies (cf. par.5.2.3 (a)) which indicated that English will be acquired more effectively if it is learned in conjunction with meaningful content and purposive communication. It seems as is educators often only focus on teaching learners to pass exams, not how to speak and write English well. For example, learners learn vast amounts of vocabulary without understanding the nuances of when to use a particular word or phrase. The learners focus almost exclusively on memorizing grammar rules and vocabulary meanings. Interactions promoting collaborative learning activities are often missing from the learning process and there is almost no interaction among peers. The traditional norm is for the educator to lecture while learners are passive participants. (Theron & Nel, 2008: 204-205; Yen- Tsu, Hsaio & Che-Hung, 2014: 2) Currently, there is strong support for socially constructed learning, which is based on Vygotsky's theory of sociocultural learning (1978). Vygotsky's work, as interpreted by educators, nurtures learners' construction of knowledge, rather than simple
acceptance of transferred information. Accordingly, the educator serves as a mediator, using language to support and scaffold language learning within a social relationship. If learning is assisted or well scaffolded learners can accomplish tasks and achieve learning that they would not be able to do on their own (Mohr & Mohr, 2014:2). Therefore I argue that for ESL learners to be successful language lessons must be integrated into other curriculum areas by making use of creative teaching methods, such as role-play, art, dramatizing, cooperative learning, use of appropriate technology and hands-on activities (cf. par.3.6.1; 5.2.1.2; 5.2.2.4).

It was also found that educators should have extensive knowledge of every learner in order to be able to differentiate and scaffold learning activities, which will then ensure success experiences (cf. par 3.6.1; 5.2.1.1). In this regard the multiple intelligence theory of Gardner (1983) has been emphasized. It is believed that by implementing the theory of multiple intelligences in the classroom, educators will be able to change their teaching and learning strategies and cater for the individual differences of learners. Gardner (1983; 1999) distinguished nine different intelligences in every individual, each manifesting in varied abilities (Gouws, 2007:61). This theory allows learners to learn in a way that complies with their particular strengths (cf. par. 3.6.1).

A significant finding was that code-switching play an important role in maintaining the learners' first language and contributes to better comprehension (cf. par. 3.6.1; 5.2.1.6). Code switching is seen as a scaffolding intervention, where the educator will employ, in one or more languages, such strategies as supplying the learner with appropriate words or ‘chunks,’ elaborating on these chunks, extending the learner’s contribution in various ways, prompting and guiding by asking questions and together with the learner reconstruct shared experiences (Mati, 2014;20).

The last finding in this theme was that effective communication with learners’ parents is of utmost importance for the learners to stay motivated and focused (cf. par. 3.6.1; par. 5.2.2.18).
The second theme of my findings included the strategies to strengthen reading, reading comprehension and writing (cf. par. 3.6.3; 5.2.3(b)). It was found that educators who read aloud with their learners experienced the most success in developing reading skills and comprehension. They further asked many questions and gave oral feedback to enhance comprehension.

Aided language stimulation (cf. par. 3.6.3; 5.2.1.3; 5.2.2.5), where the educator makes use of language combined with a visual/graphic symbol (picture) was found to be a useful strategy that impacts on how learners learn by providing them with a strong receptive (understanding) language foundation.

Teaching methods of writing(cf. par. such as summarization, cooperative writing, sentence combining (rather than de-contextualized grammar exercises), pre-writing, process writing, studying models, analysing activities, and writing for content area learning have demonstrated positive results (cf. par. 3.6.4; 5.2.1.14; 5.2.2.12).

The third theme of my findings focused on continuous and differentiated assessment tasks as well as the use of assessment concessions for ESL learners. In a differentiated classroom, rather than assessment taking place at the end of learning, learners should be assessed on an on-going basis so that teaching, and indeed the other methods of differentiation, can be continuously adjusted according to the learners' needs (cf. par. 3.6.2; 5.2.3 (c)).

Lastly, it was found that ESL learners with reading difficulties find it difficult to analyse words into phonemes and morphemes (Dednam, 2005:134). Giving them extra time during all reading and thus assessment activities can improve the quality of their learning and their output during class tests and exams (cf. par. 3.6.2).
6.7 IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Whilst doing an AI into the good practices already implemented by educators, I learnt the importance of focusing on the positive instead of looking for the difficulties that exists when educators are trying their utmost to support the learners in their care. As a key aspect of AI is collaboration and participation, the participants in this study contributed their experiences and we learnt from each other how to enhance the CALP of ESL learners in secondary schools.

6.7.1 Implications for educators

As indicated in Chapter 2, (cf. par 2.3.1) the role of the educator is a critical factor in the success or failure of inclusive education. They have to ensure that all learning programmes and materials as well as assessment procedures are accessible to all learners, and must accommodate the diversity of learning needs in order to facilitate learners’ achievement to the fullest (DBE: 2011:4-12; DBE 2014:9). This places tremendous pressure on educators and it seems as if they may become overwhelmed (cf.par.2.3.6).

Therefore, it is important to note that by using AI, the educators felt worthwhile and appreciated. They could share their support strategies freely, enabling the researcher to develop the guidelines for educators to supporting ESL learners in Grade 8 & 9.

6.7.2 Implications for DBST

Through this research study and the support strategies that were developed (cf. Appendix 5), the DBST may support other secondary schools in the district that experience similar challenges. The support strategies are general and not context- or school specific. It provides an overall sense of direction to the DBST in terms of the implementation of support strategies that were found effective in the two schools who participated in this study. The study is also an example to the DBST that educators are a rich source of
capital and knowledge and that they should hold forums with educators and tap into educators’ knowledge more frequently. Educators are also ‘experts’ and can be used by ISS Unit in workshops to train other educators in other schools to demonstrate good strategies. In this way more educators can be reached more frequently and therefore more learners can be supported.

**6.8 CONTRIBUTIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY INTO GOOD PRACTICES TO ACCELERATE THE ACQUISITION OF COGNITIVE ACADEMIC LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY FOR GRADE 8 AND 9 ENGLISH SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNERS**

*6.8.1 Contributions from the Appreciative Inquiry into good practices to accelerate the Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency for Grade 8 and 9 English Second Language learners*

Not only has this study contributed to the development of good support strategies to enhance the CALP of ESL learners in Grades 8 and 9, but can also be used to support and capacitate educators and all ESL learners in similar school contexts.

By using AI this study has shown that educators desire a positive learning environment for their students, that they hold themselves accountable for their learners’ academic success, and nurture positive conditions and opportunities to expand the strengths and successes of their learners.

Secondly, it has shown that through the AI process educators collaborate more to strengthen and enhance instructional practices to build a highly successful second language learning environment. Collaboration was viewed by the educators as a means of strengthening and enhancing practices by empowering others and building relationships. It therefore indicates that the AI process generates a belief that collaboration is a positive approach for finding solutions to challenges.
Throughout this research process it became evident that the educators believe it is important to work as a team. The commitment they made to each stakeholder helped them look to their strengths for making things better. This study in the form of AI can thus help educators to perceive their strengths through others’ successes.

Thirdly, the AI process revealed that educators valued and cared about all school stakeholders. They identified their positive core by focusing on a caring and valuing environment for all stakeholders. The AI process energized the passion for teaching.

Fourthly, my study has shown that AI has the capacity to generate a positive caring environment through the power of affirmative and positive dialogue. It provides an affirmative language that heightened the awareness of the positive core creating a sense of inclusion. It builds capacity for diversity and tolerance strengthened by the relationships established in an inclusive community. Through the AI process in my study, participants understood the strengths of the school stakeholders, which include the learners, their parents and colleagues. They gave examples indicating how relationships in an inclusive community were necessary to create successful teaching practices.

AI further guided the educators to recognize high teaching experiences through the classroom dynamics and staff relationships. It also demonstrates that ESL learners and educators were more willing to take risks in instructional practices. The learners were more secure in their learning process due to the intensive support they received.

A further contribution is that AI encourages new practices and design for best practices for the future through shared decision making.

Lastly, the AI process espouses the desire to create a family oriented environment that is student focused for educators to use progressive instructional practices. It can be used to build teacher capacity in schools, which will have a positive impact on learner achievement.
It is further important to indicate that the findings of this research study enhanced the pool of knowledge pertaining to good support strategies to enhance CALP of ESL learners. Through this study the schools and I were able to get a better understanding of the impact of effective support strategies on the enhancement of CALP and the effect thereof on the learners’ achievement.

The practical contribution of this study lies in the development and provisioning of good support strategies to enhance the CALP of ESL learners who experience barriers to learning in a secondary school. The outcome of the study resulted in the development of guidelines which will empower the ISS, DBST, SBST LSE’s and educators. The guidelines will further make a contribution to the continuous professional development of the educators in the schools, as in-service training will be done by the officials of the ISS unit.

The theoretical contribution of this study is that the research findings have enhanced the pool of knowledge pertaining to the support of CALP among ESL learners in Grades 8 and 9. The study has also expanded the pool of knowledge regarding AI as research method, and can lay the groundwork for other researchers in this field to use and explore it in future.

6.8.2 Limitations of appreciative inquiry into good practices to accelerate the acquisition of CALP for Grade 8 and 9 ESL learners

The first limitation of the study lies therein that the support strategies that were developed were not implemented and evaluated to determine the sustainability thereof in secondary schools and the fact that AI was not yet used by the DBST to develop teacher capacity.

A second limitation is the fact that I have only done research in two schools of which one is a school who caters for learners with specific learning difficulties.
It will be interesting to see a further study focusing on the development of educators by using AI. The aspect of sustainability of the support strategies in other schools can also form part of another study in future.

6.9 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

The support strategies to enhance the CALP of ESL learners suggest research in the following areas:

- Longitudinal studies should be conducted in order to determine if the support strategies are effective and sustainable over a longer period of time.

- These support strategies should be implemented and researched in secondary- and primary schools in other areas such as schools in townships and rural areas.

- A study should be done to determine to effect of using AI in the capacitation and development of educators.

- It is important that a study should be done which focus on the effective use of physical-, technical- and human resources in the form of AI.

6.10 CONCLUSION

This chapter gives a summary of the whole study with regard to the purpose and research questions of the study as well as an overview of the literature and methodology. Emphasis was placed on the implication of the findings and the support strategies for the educators and DBST. The most important contribution of this study was, for me as a psychologist, the effect of AI on the morale of educators. It became evident that AI can be used to bring about positive change in the way educators teach and reach learners in need of additional support. Lastly recommendations for future research were made.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


McEwan, E.K. (2002). *Teach them all to read: Catching the kids who fall through the cracks.* California: Corwin Press.


APPENDIX 1
OBSERVATION SHEET

Observation Sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Differentiation/ Multiple opportunities to exhibit what every learner know /or can contribute to the lesson.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concept-and vocabulary growth/ Language enrichment across the curriculum by making use of hands-on activities such as making use of models, technology, artefacts of different cultures, pictures, role-play etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summarizing of text/ Mind-maps/ creative teaching methods to ensure the use of different learning styles.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Peer tutoring</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading aloud</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When teaching new concepts/: make use of slower reading pace and exaggerated expression.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paired reading or repeated reading</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presenting of oral feedback and providing extra time for learners to re-read written text</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make use of scaffolding</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home assignments are introduced in a meaningful way: to enhance cognitive academic language proficiency</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrating language lessons into other curriculum areas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuous and differentiated assessment tasks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment concessions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes: Learners**

______________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________
APPENDIX 2
FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW GUIDE

Interview Questions

First Interview

1. Describe a time when you were most successful and involved in teaching ESL learners.
2. What strategy/strategies did you use that contributed to the success that was experienced by ESL learners?
3. What are the core factors that give life to your support system for ESL learners, without which the SBST would cease to exist?

Second Interview

What might be the ideal support strategies to improve CALP if we take into account the following strategies that were identified during the first round of this research study?

- Scaffolding
- Extensive knowledge of every learner
- Cooperative learning/Peer coaching
- Differentiation
- Continuous and differentiated assessment tasks
- Integrating language lessons into other curriculum areas
- Multicultural picture books
- Role-play and Choral reading/ Multiple opportunities to practice reading/writing
- Creating classroom libraries
- Reading aloud
- Paired reading or repeated reading
- Presenting of oral feedback and providing extra time
- Support spelling and purposeful writing
- Aided language stimulation and vocabulary enhancement by using technology, models etc./ Hands-on activities
- Assessment concessions
APPENDIX 3
FIELD NOTES

Write own poem
Read aloud story - engage - reform
Recite and remember

Vocabulary building

By learning more with literature
Auditory - visual - kinaesthetic

Task: works to answer questions

Study meet - integrated words
Study integrated research

Sensory - culture - tech

Gap filling

Individual
IEP - orientated
Bridge class - go back

Different level
Buddy - Roger
Learning Support Programme
Continuing curr

 Derek Jackson - saying
Help others
Educational talks with teachers + educators

Pair Enrichment Training
Concrete -> Abstract

Executive Functions

Belts - Hawski
Language - Master

Quick words
Isn't - yourself

- Baseline assessment
- Pull out system

- Special School
- Vocational training

- 3 languages (Eng/Ar/Herolanguage)

- Observe - Video's
- Instructional moves with fun
- Learn through fun
- Formal English structure too difficult
- Re-teaching of basic skills
- Write for them
- Copy
- Read

Work groups

Picture books

Unified Class

Code - switching -> Contextualising
Bridging between the two languages

IF teachers could work together.
Dear MP Van Der Westhuizen

Ethical Clearance Number: 2015-011

Appreciative inquiry into good practices to accelerate the acquisition of cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) for grade 8 and 9 English second language learners

Ethical clearance for this study is granted subject to the following conditions:

· If there are major revisions to the research proposal based on recommendations from the Faculty Higher Degrees Committee, a new application for ethical clearance must be submitted.
· If the research question changes significantly so as to alter the nature of the study, it remains the duty of the student to submit a new application.
· It remains the student’s responsibility to ensure that all ethical forms and documents related to the research are kept in a safe and secure facility and are available on demand.
· Please quote the reference number above in all future communications and documents.

The Faculty of Education Research Ethics Committee has decided to
Grant ethical clearance for the proposed research.

Provisionally grant ethical clearance for the proposed research
Recommend revision and resubmission of the ethical clearance documents

Sincerely,

Prof Geoffrey Lautenbach
Chair: FACULTY OF EDUCATION RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE
9 July 2015
GDE RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER

Date: 30 September 2014

Validity of Research Approval: 9 February 2015 to 2 October 2015

Name of Researcher: Van der Westhuizen M.P.

Address of Researcher: P.O. Box 10237, Dalview; Brakpan; 1544

Telephone / Fax Number/s: 011 746 8155; 082 349 1051

Email address: lenivanderwesthuizen@gmail.com

Research Topic: Appreciative inquiry into good practices to accelerate the acquisition of cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) for Grade 8 and 9 English Second language learners

Number and type of schools: TWO Secondary Schools

District/s/SHO: Ekurhuleni North and Ekurhuleni South

Re: Approval in Respect of Request to Conduct Research

This letter serves to indicate that approval is hereby granted to the above-mentioned researcher to proceed with research in respect of the study indicated above. The onus rests with the researcher to negotiate appropriate and relevant time schedules with the school/s and/or offices involved. A separate copy of this letter must be presented to the Principal, SGB and the relevant District/Head Office Senior Manager confirming that permission has been granted for the research to be conducted. However participation is VOLUNTARY.

The following conditions apply to GDE research. The researcher has agreed to and may proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met. Approval may be withdrawn should any of the conditions listed below be flouted:

CONDITIONS FOR CONDUCTING RESEARCH IN GDE

Office of the Director: Knowledge Management and Research

Making education a societal priority

Office of the Director: Knowledge Management and Research
9th Floor, 111 Commissioner Street, Johannesburg, 2001
P.O. Box 7710, Johannesburg, 2000 Tel: (011) 355 0506
Email: David.Makhado@gauteng.gov.za
Website: www.education.gpg.gov.za
1. The District/Head Office Senior Manager's concerned must be presented with a copy of this letter;

2. A copy of this letter must be forwarded to the school principal and the chairperson of the School Governing Body (SGB.)

3. A letter / document that outlines the purpose of the research and the anticipated outcomes of such research must be made available to the principals, SGBs and District/Head Office Senior Managers of the schools and districts/offices concerned;

4. The Researcher will make every effort obtain the goodwill and co-operation of all the GDE officials, principals, SGBs, teachers and learners involved. Participation is voluntary and additional remuneration will not be paid;

5. Research may only be conducted after school hours so that the normal school programme is not interrupted. The Principal and/or Director must be consulted about an appropriate time when the researchers may carry out their research at the sites that they manage.

6. Research may only commence from the second week of February and must be concluded before the beginning of the last quarter of the academic year. If incomplete, an amended Research Approval letter may be requested to conduct research in the following year.

7. Items 6 and 7 will not apply to any research effort being undertaken on behalf of the GDE. Such research will have been commissioned and be paid for by the Gauteng Department of Education.

8. It is the researcher's responsibility to obtain written parental consent and learner;

9. The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilising his/her own research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institutions and/or the offices visited for supplying such resources.

10. The names of the GDE officials, schools, principals, parents, teachers and learners that participate in the study may not appear in the research report without the written consent of each of these individuals and/or organisations.

11. On completion of the study the researcher must supply the Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management with one Hard Cover, an electronic copy and a Research Summary of the completed Research Report;

12. The researcher may be expected to provide short presentations on the purpose, findings and recommendations of his/her research to both GDE officials and the schools concerned;

13. Should the researcher have been involved with research at a school and/or a district/head office level, the Director and school concerned must also be supplied with a brief summary of the purpose, findings and recommendations of the research study.

The Gauteng Department of Education wishes you well in this important undertaking and looks forward to examining the findings of your research study.

Kind regards

2014/01/01

Dr David Makhado

Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management

DATE: 

Making education a societal priority

Office of the Director: Knowledge Management and Research

9th Floor, 111 Commissioner Street, Johannesburg, 2001
P.O. Box 7710, Johannesburg, 2000 Tel: (011) 355 0506
Email: David.Makhado@gauteng.gov.za
Website: www.education.gauteng.gov.za
Informed Consent/Assent Form

Project Title:
Appreciative Inquiry into good practices to accelerate the acquisition of cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) for grade 8 and 9 English second language learners

Investigator:
M.D. van der Westhuizen

Date:

Please mark the appropriate checkboxes. I hereby:
☐ Agree to be involved in the above research project as a participant.
☐ Agree to be involved in the above research project as an observer to protect the rights of:
  ☐ Children younger than 16 years of age.
  ☐ Children younger than 18 years of age who might be vulnerable*.
☐ Agree that my child may participate in the above research project.
☐ Agree that my child may be involved in the above research project as participants.
☐ I have read the research information sheet pertaining to this research project for had I explained to me and I understand the nature of the research and my role in it. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about my involvement in this study. I understand that any personal details (and any identifying data) will be kept strictly confidential. I understand that I may withdraw my consent and participation in this study at any time, without prejudice.

☐ Please allow me to review the report after publication. I supply my details below for this purpose:
☐ I would like to retain a copy of this signed document as proof of the contractual agreement between myself and the researcher.

Name:
Phone or Cell number:
email address:

Signature:

[If applicable:]
☐ I willingly provide my consent/assent for using audio recording of my/the participant’s contributions.
☐ I willingly provide my consent/assent for using video recording of my/the participant’s contributions.
☐ I willingly provide my consent/assent for the use of photographs in this study.

Signature (and date):
Signature of person taking the consent (and date):

Faculty of Education Research Ethics Committee, University of Johannesburg, Updated January 2014
Please report any instance of unethical research practice to ethical@uj.ac.za or 011 789 2416.

---

Informed Consent/Assent Form

Project Title:
Appreciative inquiry into good practices to accelerate the acquisition of cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) for grade 8 and 9 English second language learners

Investigator:
M.D. van der Westhuizen

Date:

Please mark the appropriate checkboxes. I hereby:
☐ Agree to be involved in the above research project as a participant.
☐ Agree to be involved in the above research project as an observer to protect the rights of:
  ☐ Children younger than 16 years of age.
  ☐ Children younger than 18 years of age who might be vulnerable*.
☐ Children younger than 18 years of age who are part of a child-headed family.
☐ Agree that my child may participate in the above research project.
☐ Agree that my child may be involved in the above research project as participants.
☐ I have read the research information sheet pertaining to this research project for had I explained to me and I understand the nature of the research and my role in it. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about my involvement in this study. I understand that any personal details (and any identifying data) will be kept strictly confidential. I understand that I may withdraw my consent and participation in this study at any time, without prejudice.

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☐ I willingly provide my consent/assent for using audio recording of my/the participant’s contributions.
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Signature (and date):
Signature of person taking the consent (and date):

Faculty of Education Research Ethics Committee, University of Johannesburg, Updated January 2014
Please report any instance of unethical research practice to ethical@uj.ac.za or 011 789 2416.

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205
Appendix 5
Support Strategies Guidelines

Guidelines to
Accelerate the acquisition
of
Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency
for
English Second Language Learners
Grade 8 & 9.
Guidelines to
Accelerate the acquisition
of
Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency
for
English Second Language Learners
Grade 8 & 9.

Leni Van der Westhuizen
September 2016
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Introduction</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Literature overview</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Literature challenges in South Africa</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 English Second Language learners</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Support Strategies</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 General school and classroom strategies</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.1 Extensive knowledge of your learner</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.2 Success experiences</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.3 Creative teaching methods</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.4 Differentiation</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.5 Scaffolding</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.6 Integrating language lessons into other curriculum areas</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.7 Co-teaching and code-switching/Interpretation</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.8 Cooperative learning</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.9 Aided language stimulation</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.10 Multi-level Teaching</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.11 Parental involvement</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.12 Homework</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Strategies to strengthen reading, reading comprehension and writing</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Re-teaching of basic literacy skills</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Teaching Reading</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2.1 Reading aloud</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2.2 Paired reading</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2.3 Reading material</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2.4 Reading comprehension</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3 Teaching Spelling and Grammar</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
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<td>4.4 Guided Writing</td>
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<td><strong>Assessment</strong></td>
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<td>5.1</td>
<td>Continuous and differentiated assessment tasks</td>
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<td>5.2</td>
<td>Special Concessions</td>
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<td>Bibliography</td>
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Due to South Africa’s history of racial discrimination, many black parents perceive schools providing English medium education as to be preferable to that provided by less resourced schools which use indigenous languages as the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT). English is seen as the global language that will lead their children to success and freedom. Consequently, many parents choose to enroll their children in ex-model C schools where the LoLT is English. In this context black learners have to master all learning areas using English as LoLT with little or no support in the home language.

The difficulties faced by learners who are taught in their second or third language are a barrier that evokes grave concern. Most South African learners are educated in a language other than their first language by educators who teach using their second or third language. Learners from different cultural and language backgrounds are found in the same classroom. This linguistic and cultural diversity poses a great challenge for educators.

Therefore I undertook an Appreciative Inquiry into the good practices of two ex-model C schools to identify the effective strategies already used by the educators. By using affirmative language and questions the educators of these two schools was motivated to explore even better strategies to be included in these guidelines. The aim of these guidelines is to provide effective support strategies to educators, ISS Officials and DBST members in order to accelerate the acquisition of Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) of ESL learners.
The most recent literacy research conducted in South Africa was the Annual National Assessment (ANA) during September 2014. Through the ANA the Department of Education (DoE) was able to identify strengths and weaknesses related to learner performance. The national average performance for literacy (Home language) Grade 9 stands at 48% and for first additional language is 34%. During this assessment it was found that many learners in both Home Language and First Additional Language struggle to respond to questions that require the use of their own words. Therefore, summarising a text using own words, becomes extremely difficult. It was also stipulated that learners are unable to interpret a sentence or give an opinion when required and lack the required editing skills when writing letters.

The results for 2014 are available from the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) website.

The poor performance of learners was also evident in the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), which included South African learners in a comparison of literacy across 40 countries. Of particular concern was that South African Grade 5 learners obtained the lowest scores despite being compared with Grade 4 learners internationally. Moreover, South African learners were reported to perform worse than those in neighbouring countries, such as Mozambique, Swaziland, Botswana and Zimbabwe.
2.2. English Second Language Learners

The majority of learners in South Africa learn in English, which is not their mother tongue. A learner needs to be able to speak, read, write, think, learn and be confident in the language of learning and teaching, before he/she will be able to reach his/her full potential. In other words a learner has to be proficient in the language of learning and teaching.

Language learning is developmental; it takes considerable time to become a fluent user of a new language. Language learning happens gradually, in stages, and not all at once. It takes young children about 5-6 years to learn the basics of their first language(s) in which they have been immersed by their families. Second language acquisition can be very complicated and may take much longer.

Second language acquisition takes many years and is often described in terms of Cummins’ construct of two types of proficiency. The first is referred to as ‘Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills’ (BICS). The second type of language proficiency is ‘Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency’ (CALP).

BICS is the language proficiency used for social everyday communication and is often highly contextualised, used for real life events, sharing personal information and for achieving routine social functions. Most second language learners immersed in an English second language-speaking context will be proficient in BICS after approximately two years of learning and exposure to the target language. Learners who are not immersed in an English second language-speaking context may take relatively longer to acquire proficiency in BICS. Similarly, learners with no bilingual or ESL support are more likely to take longer to acquire BICS.
Significantly, learners who are proficient in BICS may give a misleading impression that they are able to function in all settings, including in the classroom, using English. However, BICS proficiency does not necessarily translate into the academic and more abstract language of learning.

Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) is required for academic tasks which require a greater degree of cognitive engagement and are accompanied by less contextual support. CALP tasks require distinct technical vocabularies. Developmentally, spoken and written genres become more grammatically complex as information is manipulated and reshaped for particular purposes. These genres, combined with cognitively challenging content and higher order thinking and expression, make the acquisition of academic English a much more difficult and lengthy process; up to seven years, or more for those with interrupted or no schooling in their first language.

Research (Cummins, 2000) has shown that it is important to maintain and develop the learners’ first language in order for them to become successful second language learners. ESL learners are able to transfer their cognitive, social and cultural capacities in their first language to aid development in their second language. Those ESL learners who have formal education in their home language are therefore generally able to acquire CALP more rapidly than those ESL learners who have no or limited education in their first language.

It is of utmost importance that the conditions of first language acquisition be utilized to ensure a linguistically enriched second language learning situation. Classroom interaction should not be dominated by educator talk with little chance for learners to practise or experiment with language or to make errors. Language output should not only be written, as first language acquisition shows that social interaction has a substantial effect on proficiency and highlights the importance of creating opportunities within the classroom for meaningful interaction in the form of real conversations.
It is necessary that learners have time to adjust to the ESL environment and to develop friendly relations with others in the group. They need to feel secure and at home in this environment and to trust their educators. Educators need to encourage the principles of inclusion. If learners feel comfortable and confident in the use of a second language, they will be actively involved when interacting with the reading text. They will also be able to use their cognitive process in order to create meaning and sense of what they are reading. It is of utmost importance that learners make assumptions, deductions and hypotheses about how the language works and then try it out, in a similar way to that of young child learning the home language. It is therefore crucial that the educator has a positive and supportive attitude towards the learners’ home language and culture and is sensitive to how different languages groups express ideas.

There are definitely disadvantages to learning in a second language. ESL learners have limited vocabulary that hinders participation in language activities. The likelihood of reading difficulty increases. ESL learners do not have a solid basis for knowing whether their reading is correct because the crucial meaning-making process is short circuited by lack of language knowledge. Teaching and learning in a second language may cause a breakdown in communication between the educator and the learner. Effective learning can only take place if the teacher and learners have a common understanding of the concepts of what the teacher is teaching.

Just as there are disadvantages, there are advantages of learning in a second or third language. It was found that learners who had studied a second language show greater cognitive development in areas of mental flexibility, creativity, divergent thinking and higher order thinking skills. Learning in a second language have shown to enhance listening skills, memory and learners have a greater understanding of their own language.
Learn as much about ESL learners as you can. The more you know about them and their backgrounds, the easier it will be for you to incorporate them into your classroom, and thereby enrich the lives and learning of everyone.

Don’t confuse low English proficiency with low intelligence or lack of experience. They also bring many first language literacy skills that can be transferred to their work in the English language.

It is a good idea to do a base-line assessment in order to know on what level the ESL learners are functioning. By knowing their level of functioning you will be able to support them better.

Ensure success experiences for the learners. Learners who struggle academically have a low self-image and need to be successful to be motivated. Educators should make sure that they keep focusing on the strengths of every learner. Set up tasks which challenge the learners to perform beyond their current capacity and provide support strategies which make it possible for the learners to perform at the new level. If the task is not challenging...
enough the learners will be bored and become unmotivated: however, if there is not efficient support, learners will become frustrated and may give up (Ford, 2015: 1; Tierney & Readence, 2000:35).

3.1.3 Creative teaching methods

Creative teaching methods, such as role-play, art, dramatizing, use of appropriate technology and hands-on activities proved to be successful when supporting ESL learners.

Role-play is an effective way to support ESL learners to use appropriate language to expressive themselves (Zwiers, 2014:166). He emphasizes that educators must provide considerable support to learners in order to be able to take on different perspectives, consider different solutions and to ask provocative questions.

Hands-on-activities refers to the use of realia. Realia is a term for any real, concrete object used in the classroom to create connections with vocabulary words, stimulate conversation, and build background knowledge. Realia gives students the opportunity to use all of their senses to learn about a given subject, and is appropriate for any Grade or skill level (Herrel, 2000: 34). Educators can defray costs by collaborating on a school wide collection of realia that all can use. When the real object is not available or is impractical, educators can use models or semi-concrete objects, such as photographs, illustrations and artwork. The use of realia can also be an ideal way to incorporate cultural content into a lesson. For example, eating utensils, clothing and music from different cultures can build vocabulary and increase comprehension while also providing insight into different cultures.
Dramatizing in the classroom serves both learners and educators, affording learners the opportunity to learn and demonstrate language skills and providing educators a means of assessing learner vocabulary, syntactic skills, and comprehension. It expands opportunities for verbal interaction by promoting interactive and engaging learning environments. By integrating movement and gesture with vocabulary lessons, and dialogue, educators facilitate the development of learners' semantic and conceptual knowledge, as well as narrative discourse. Dramatization helps learners better understand the plot and the feelings of the characters, even if they do not initially comprehend all of the words. (Greenfader & Brouilette, 2013).

3.1.4 Differentiation

Differentiation in the classroom is all about understanding that we are dealing with a group of diverse individuals and adapting our teaching to ensure that all of them have access to learning. It should be an on-going and flexible process which not only profiles students initially but also recognizes progress and areas for improvement and adjusts accordingly to ensure learning needs continue to be met. In short, it shifts the focus from teaching a subject to teaching the learners.
Educators need to realise that learners learn differently and therefore they need creative methods to support ESL learners to be successful in all learning activities. With regard to this the theory of multiple intelligences by Howard Gardner (1983) is significant. It suggests using teaching approaches that tap each learner's individual talents as well as the modality through which he/she learns best. The multiple intelligences include: linguistic/verbal, logical/mathematical, musical, bodily-kinaesthetic, visual/spatial, interpersonal and intrapersonal.

It is necessary for educators to use the knowledge of multiple intelligences and various learning styles in order to differentiate their way of teaching ESL learners.

During my research I found that ESL learners need to use all their senses when learning. Ways to plan lessons using the multiple intelligences theory (Gardiner, 1983) follow:

- **“Verbal / Linguistic learners”** learn best through hearing and seeing words, discussions and debating. Educators have to present content verbally, ask clarifying questions and allow for feedback.

- **“Auditory learners”** learn best when listening. Recording of the learning material can be to their benefit, especially if they also struggle with reading.

- **“Visual /spatial learners”** learn best when they work with pictures and colours, when they draw and can visualize material presented to them. Videos, cartoons, overhead projectors, smartboards and computer games works well for them. Make sure they have a clear view of you (teacher) when you are speaking so they can see your body language and facial expression. Use colour to highlight important points in text. They benefit a great deal from visual handouts to study.

- **Bodily/tactile learners** learn physically by touching and manipulating objects. Make use lots of objects when teaching new vocabulary like toys, plastic fruits, and skeletons, real objects like a motorcycle or an organ, like a heart, to explain concepts. They work best in a standing position and like to move around when studying.
Another important issue is to remember that they like to skim through reading material to get a rough idea what it is about before reading it in detail. Role-play, drama, things to build, sports and physical games and hands-on learning is best for them.

- Learners love music, therefore play songs in class in order to develop language usage and extend vocabulary. You can create musical rhythms for students to remember content.
- Some learners learn best on their own and are seen as learners who focus inwards. They learn best by individualised projects and working on their own pace. This is called the intrapersonal learning style.
- The interpersonal learning style refers to cooperative learning or the “buddy system” where learners are divided into small groups or are paired to help each other. Brainstorming is an excellent way to help learners think wider. It also helps to listen to other learners using English and thus improve not only language usage and vocabulary, but also listening skills.

3.1.5 Scaffolding

Scaffolding refers to the support provided by others. In its literal sense, scaffolding is a support structure that is erected around a building under construction. When the building is strong enough, the scaffolding can be removed and the building will remain strong. Teachers can scaffold learning by first modelling tasks and then supporting learners as they attempt these tasks. Learners and teachers must interact with each other to construct understanding and purpose for learning. In a nutshell scaffolding can be defined as teachers giving high support for learners practicing new skills and then slowly decreasing that support to increase learner’s ownership and self-sufficiency.
Activities that can be used to scaffold learning: the amount of work may be altered; assignments can start off simple and then gradually be built up to become more complex; additional time could be provided; and visual stimuli can be added to help learners understand the specific content that is being taught.

Educators can scaffold writing by making use of graphic organizers (mind-maps) to plan effectively, before writing an essay. Learners must be taught to ask themselves clarifying questions such as: ‘Who did the task?’ ‘What did he/she do?’ ‘Why did he/she do it?’ by answering these questions learners will be able to write more successfully.

The essays, stories, letters and articles of other authors (educators, learners, novelists, poets etc.) can be analysed and discussed in order to provide a scaffold to the learners and make it easier for them to write in different genres.

Reading- and comprehending-aloud as scaffolding for reading will be discussed in paragraph 4.2.1

Through professional collaboration, educators will be able to coordinate their content standards with English language standards to develop appropriate learning objectives. For example, a content objective for science might be: “Learners will be able to identify a variety of adaptations among animals.” The language objective might be: “Learners will be able to write simple sentences describing animals” (Calderón, 2007:146).
ESL teaching is every educator’s responsibility. Each subject area has its own language demands and specific spoken and written genres. Teachers should be aware of these, and consider the explicit teaching required in order for their ESL learners to access the learning experiences, including both the intended curriculum and assessment of the learning.

ESL learners have limited vocabulary that hinders their learning in English. Probably the most obvious instructional modification is to use their home language for clarification and explanation. This can be done by a teacher, a classroom aid, a peer, or a volunteer in the classroom, who is a home language speaker. Another way to use the primary language but keep the focus on English instruction is to introduce new concepts in the home language prior to the lesson in English, then afterward review the new content, again in the primary language. Learners can then create their own dictionaries to help them to study for exams.

Teachers can use texts that involve the learners’ native culture, can decorate the classroom with posters and objects that reflect the learners’ diversity of language and culture, can organize entire lessons around cultural content, and can encourage learners to use words from their home language when they cannot find the appropriate word in English (Freeman & Freeman, 2001).

It is important for the educator to ensure that the learners do not become dependent on a ‘translator’ who provides a crutch such that learners do not exercise themselves to learn English.
Research shows that organizing learners into cooperative groups yields a positive effect on overall learning. Motivation for grouping learners stems from Vygotsky’s belief that what a learner can do with assistance today, he or she can do alone tomorrow. A further advantage of this approach is that by means of discussion, questioning, organisation and application, the learners’ comprehension, retention of important concepts, attitudes and interpersonal relationships improve.

When applying cooperative learning strategies, keep groups small and don't overuse this strategy. Be systematic and consistent in your approach. Cooperative learning or peer tutoring could be expanded to “cross-age tutors”, which indicates that learners from upper grades within the school can be asked to support Grade 8 and 9 learners. Another peer-support strategy that can help ESL learners is the forming of study-groups. The group members can check one another’s homework, projects etc. Thus, academic growth as well as peer relationships can be strengthened.
Aided language stimulation is a useful strategy that impacts on how learners learn by providing them with a strong receptive (understanding) language foundation. The educator makes use of language combined with a visual/graphic symbol (picture), thereby providing the learners with an additional cue (visual supplementation). In other words, they not only have to listen to the educator’s voice, but they also see the pictures of the words, which help them understand and remember. Some common visual learning strategies include creating graphic organizers, diagramming, mind mapping, outlining and more. Technology can be used effectively with ESL learners because it tends to increase engagement. In addition, technology often provides a visual or audio component that expands context while also addressing different learning styles. Incorporating technology also develops computer literacy for ESL learners, which is so important in current times.

Multi-level teaching is designed to address learners’ individual needs (DBE, 2011:6). The educator introduce the target concept to the whole class first. Throughout the presentation of the target concept during the lesson, the teacher at different times lowers and raises instruction to keep the below level and above-level learners interested. This shows that the teacher is catering for the different abilities. When assigning a task, the
teacher will split learners into separate groups according to their different levels. Learners’
tasks may be levelled according to their interests, proficiency and language skill. The
teacher will end the lesson with the whole class together in the application stage of the
lesson.
For example the class may watch a rugby match together. The educator divide the
learners into groups, according to their abilities. The first group, may draw a picture of the
rugby field, the ball and the different rugby jerseys that were worn by the players. They
will be expected to write short sentences on how the jerseys looked like etc.
The second group can be asked to record, in table format, how many players are in a
team, how many reserve players there were and how long each half of the match lasted.
The last group may be asked to write an essay on the rules of rugby.
After this has been completed each group will present their work and the educator will
then ensure that open ended questions are asked and that learners are able to discuss
the topic enthusiastically.

Involve learners’ parents as much as possible. When everyone feels integrated and
acknowledged, they will be inspired to work harder. Many parents find it difficult to
communicate with educators, not only because of lack of time but sometimes due to the
fact that they have to deal with a language barrier themselves, which can be very
intimidating. In order for children to learn and excel at their optimum level, we need to
bridge this gap among educators, parents, and learners, and more importantly, find ways in which parents can play an active role in their child’s education, regardless of their language preference. It is important for parents to understand how schools work and the expectations of their own involvement in the process.

By creating a workshop where both English and vernacular language is used, parents will feel more involved in their child’s learning process, and perhaps, will want to become more active in the process. Providing the necessary tools for active participation, parents will be able to communicate together, as well as with educators, and other parts of the community that will assist in their ability to meet their child’s academic needs. It is important that educators create two-way communication between school and home. Educators can involve parents in their children’s academic learning at home, by designing homework that enables learners and parents to share and discuss interesting tasks.

Homework provides students with the opportunity to extend their learning outside the classroom. However, research shows that the amount of homework assigned should differ for every learner in order to address the skills that need to be developed. It is further important that the learner must be able to succeed on their own. Teachers should try to give feedback on all homework assigned.
Basic literacy skills refers to basic reading and spelling skills. These components included reading as meaning-making, reading for practice, and activities related to oral fluency, grammatical accuracy, and vocabulary development.

After the baseline assessment is done, it is sometimes needed to support certain learners more individually.

4.2 Teaching Reading

Many learners who fall short regarding effective reading skills in South Africa are ESL learners whose reading difficulty, tends to be masked by the language problem. When learners have difficulty reading to learn, it is often argued that their comprehension problems stem from limited English proficiency. This reflects an underlying assumption that language proficiency and reading ability is basically ‘the same thing’. If this were so, then all first language speakers should automatically be good readers in their first language. Furthermore, if language proficiency and reading ability was basically ‘the same thing’, then improving the language proficiency of learners should improve their reading comprehension but this this does not readily happen (Pretorius 2002:14 -16).
fact it is attention to reading that improves reading skills, and in the process language proficiency also improves.

To improve reading skills, effective reading instruction is important at school level. Effective reading instruction is built on a foundation that learners have frequent and intensive opportunities to read, are exposed to frequent spelling-sound relationships and understands how sounds are represented alphabetically. It is further important during reading instructions that learners understand that they have to read to obtain meaning from print, which includes that they understand the nature of the alphabetically writing system (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998:4-6).

4.2.1 Reading aloud

Reading aloud to learners motivates learners to read, provides an adult reading model, develops sense of story and acquaints learners with books and increases vocabulary and phonological awareness (Mercer & Mercer, 2001:323).

Learners enjoy facial expression and animation on the part of the reader; this helps the book come alive (Morrow, 2002:32). Reading is a social activity. Learners who are frequently read to, will read their favourite books by themselves or to others (Snow et al., 1998:59).

Reading aloud builds language and thinking in the following ways:

- Developing academic listening skills, such as discriminating important from non-important information. This is often from hearing differences in tone and emphasis.
- Developing abilities to handle longer and more complex sentences.
- It exposes learners to text and concepts above their current independent comprehension levels.
- Building knowledge needed for class- and group discussions.
When educators read aloud, learners will hear how they use punctuation, pauses and intonation to separate clauses, stress key points etc. (Zwiers, 2014:189).

4.2.2 Paired reading

It can be defined as the process where learners read with a friend or partner. A weak reader is usually paired with a stronger reader. The stronger reader is considered the buddy and must help the poor reader when he or she struggles to pronounce a word correctly. It is important that they discuss what they are reading with special emphasis on difficult words.

4.2.3 Reading material

In increasingly diverse South African classrooms, it is critical for books to reflect the cultural backgrounds of all learners. It is suggested that educators make use of multicultural picture books.

Educators can collect newspaper stories or articles from magazines and bind them into books. By creating a classroom library on stories that appeals to them, they will gain grammar as well as vocabulary form reading it.

Fill your classroom environment with print and with interesting things to talk about and read and write about. Creating a language-rich environment will allow your ESL students to learn even when you aren’t directly teaching them.
Make use of dictionaries, especially illustrated dictionaries helps learners to make meaning out of the text.

4.2.4 Reading comprehension

Because reading is a meaning-making process, it is essential that learners be helped to make sense of what they read; lessons would be more effective, if words are taught in context. In learning a new word, a learner must hear it, say it, and be able to use it in a sentence or draw and see a picture about it. Repetition is essential, but always should be contextualized in meaningful ways.

Role-play and choral reading is another way of providing comprehensible input for ESL learners. Choral reading involves the recitation of a poem or short text, along with motions and gestures that help the learners dramatically act out the meaning.

As ESL learners find it difficult to understand what they are reading due to lack of vocabulary, poor pronunciation of words, poor fluency etc.; learning cannot take place. Educators should help learners develop mental images by describing the mental images they are forming as they read the passage out loud to the learners. Stop learners from time to time and ask them to describe images gained from the reading, ask questions and help learners to find the main idea and supporting details of a story (Shankar & Ekwall, 2003:166). Zwiers (2014: 189) refers to this strategy as ‘comprehending aloud’. It actually means that educators are thinking aloud, when reading to the learners. Learners will then be able to think like this when reading alone and thus create better comprehension.

When presenting a lesson, educators can stop learners from time to time and ask them to describe images gained from the reading, ask questions and help learners to find the main idea and supporting details of the learning material, by asking them clarifying questions.
Another way to promote greater comprehension is to help learners to analyse the information presented and then put it in their own words.

Learning to write in English can be complicated as spoken English has approximately 5000 different possible syllables. Instead of representing each one with a symbol in the writing system, written English relies on an alphabetic system that represents the parts that make up a spoken syllable, rather than representing the syllable as a unit. For example learning a syllabic system like the Japanese ‘Katakana” is straight forward, as the syllables are pronounceable, but take for instance a word like ‘electric’ and ‘electricity’, where the last sound in ‘electric’ is pronounced as a ‘k’, but in ‘electricity’ as a ‘s’. In English rather than preserving one-letter-to-one-sound correspondence, the spelling of the word is preserve, which makes writing and reading English more difficult for ESL learners.

Educators should:

- Apply the knowledge of phonology (the sound system), morphology (the structure of words), syntax (phrase and sentence structure), semantics (word/sentence meaning), and pragmatics (the effect of context on language) to help ESL learners develop oral, reading, and writing skills in English.

- Demonstrate proficiency in English and serve as a good language model for ESL learners.

- Provide learners with correction and feedback as soon as possible after the learner makes a mistake.
- Be familiar with the kinds of changes that occur as learners become young adults. Anxiety and not wanting to look foolish in front of friends may affect these students' ability to learn and use a second language. Correct their spelling and grammar in a very subtle manner. Do not laugh at them or belittle them.
- Make use of dictionaries, picture dictionaries and wordlists to support the learning of difficult and new English words.

4.4 Guided writing

ESL learners must learn explicit strategies on how to write, depending on the type of text. Teaching methods of writing such as summarization, cooperative writing, sentence combining (rather than de-contextualized grammar exercises), pre-writing, process writing, studying models, analysing activities, and writing for content area learning have demonstrated positive results.
The purpose of assessment is to provide information on the learners’ achievement and progress and set the direction for on-going teaching and learning, being continuous and cyclical (Nel, Nel & Hugo, 2012: 48-54).

In a differentiated classroom, rather than assessment taking place at the end of learning, learners have to be assessed on an on-going basis so that teaching and the other methods of differentiation can be continuously adjusted according to the learners’ needs.

Teaching and assessment should be aligned by pre-teaching vocabulary and concepts used in assessment tasks, especially instructional, abstract or formal language not necessarily used in classroom talk. For example, in a mathematics questions there are many examples of key technical vocabulary such as ‘product’, ‘match’, ‘how many are left’ which can be easily misunderstood if students are not aware of the meaning of these terms in the context of the discipline in which they are used. Provisioning of vocabulary lists and bilingual dictionaries will support ESL learners immensely. Educators can make use of True/False-, Multiple choice-, Fill in the blank- and clarifying questions such as the following:

**To assess knowledge:**

- What is the definition for...?
- What happened after...?
As learners with reading difficulties find it difficult to analyse words into phonemes and morphemes (Dednam, 2005:134), giving them extra time during all reading and thus assessment activities can improve the quality of their learning and their output during tests and exams. White Paper 6 (2001: 19-20) states that the education and training system should promote education for all and foster the development of inclusive and supportive centres of learning. A concession is granted based on the specific needs and circumstances of the learner. In most cases the learner will be allowed additional time or
any other alternative or adapted method of examining in order to be able to fulfil the assessment requirements for a particular grade.


